

Hekmatyar extends truce, but siege to stay

JALALABAD (AP) — Renegade Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar agreed Tuesday to extend a ceasefire in the civil war. But he also vowed to maintain a blockade that has prevented food from reaching Kabul, the capital. Food stocks are desperately low in Kabul, and aid agencies say resupplies are needed urgently to feed more than 300,000 people driven from their homes by heavy fighting between the rival factions. Mr. Hekmatyar said he would allow the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to bring food supplies from neighbouring Pakistan up to the outskirts of Kabul, which he controls along with his ally, warlord Rashid Dostum. Mr. Hekmatyar said Kabul residents would be allowed to come into his areas and pick up food. But he said he would not allow food shipments to go into the capital, which is controlled by his arch rival, President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Mr. Hekmatyar and General Dostum launched a ferocious assault against the president's forces Jan. 1, but have been unable to make inroads into the capital.

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Atas leaves for home

AMMAN (Petra) — Yemeni Prime Minister Huider Abu Baker Al Atas left Amman home Wednesday morning ending a several-day visit during which he attended the signing of the Yemeni reconciliation accord in Amman Sunday. Mr. Atas was seen off at the airport by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and other officials.

Egypt, Jordan hold economic talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Egyptian Minister of Industry and Trade Mahmoud Moshmaha and Mahmoud arrived here Tuesday on a four-day official visit to Jordan during which he will chair the Egyptian side to the Joint Jordanian-Egyptian Economic Committee which meets here today. In an arrival statement, Mr. Mahmoud said he would hold economic and commercial talks with senior Jordanian officials and would also sign with his Jordanian counterpart Rima Khalaf a commercial protocol defining list of commodities to be exchanged by both countries.

FIS leaders freed from jail

ALGIERS (AFP) — Two leaders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were freed from prison, the APS news agency reported Tuesday, citing the public prosecutor in Blida. The two were identified as Ali Djeddi, in charge of the fundamentalist movement's political relations, and Abdul Kader Boukhamseen, a member of the FIS's executive supreme council. They were sentenced to four years in prison each for threatening state security and had been detained at the Blida military prison since June 1991. The agency did not say why the two were released before the end of their terms (French fears, page 10)

Iran says helicopter landed in Iraq

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said on Tuesday an Iranian helicopter had made an emergency landing in northern Iraq and Tehran had asked Baghdad for information on the fate of the two crew members. A Foreign Ministry spokesman, quoted by the Iranian news agency IRNA, said the helicopter disappeared three days ago after its pilot reported technical failure. "The spokesman called on the Iraqi government to furnish Iran with further details on the issue through diplomatic channels." IRNA said.

Israel population up to 5.3 million

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's population grew to over 5.3 million in 1993, the central Bureau of Statistics announced Tuesday. The population of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip went from 105,000 in 1992 to 115,000 last year, the bureau said in a statement.

The Palestinian population in the occupied territories is pegged around 1.9 million. Israel's population at the end of 1993 stood at 5.325 million, the statement said, compared to 5.296 million a year earlier.

The population growth rate is 2.5 per cent, down slightly from 2.7 per cent the year before. The statement said 60 per cent of the growth came from the birthrate and 40 per cent from immigration.

Iran increases Rushdie bounty

TEHRAN (AP) — An Iranian foundation on Tuesday increased its \$2 million reward for Salman Rushdie's head, as an incentive for his bodyguards.

Mr. Asfour declined comment on reports that Israel will release some Palestinian prisoners on "Eid Al Fitr."

"We are discussing the issue on principle," Mr. Asfour said. "We hope to reach an agreement on this subject soon."

Egypt's Middle East News

Russia blocks wider ultimatums in Bosnia

BONN (Agencies) — Diplomats agreed Tuesday to push the Bosnian factions towards a peace settlement to divide Bosnia into ethnic states, but could not agree on extending cease-fire ultimatums to other parts of the country.

The senior diplomats from the United States, Russia and Western Europe will work to extend the Sarajevo truce model to other beleaguered Bosnian towns and cities, but with a crucial difference — no new threats, at least for now.

Russia said it would not tolerate a wider extension of the National Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ultimatum that forced Bosnian Serbs to withdraw their artillery from around Sarajevo, two European officials said after the meeting.

After that impasse, Western diplomats agreed efforts should be focused on getting Bosnia's Muslims, Serbs and Croats to work out a peaceful division of the former Yugoslav republic, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

In a joint statement, the diplomats said they would seek to improve the humanitarian situation in Serb besieged enclaves and push Muslims and Croats to stop fighting in the southwestern city of Mostar and in central Bosnia.

They also said they would insist that Bosnian Serbs not move any of the artillery pulled back from Sarajevo to other

war fronts.

Among those taking part in the meeting were Russian Deputy Foreign Minister and envoy for Yugoslavia Vitaly Churkin, Assistant U.S. Secretary for European Affairs Stephen Oxman and the U.S. special envoy for Yugoslavia, Charles Redman.

"The U.S., Russia and the European Community want to work together" on the Bosnia question, Mr. Churkin said, after the meeting which analysts said confirmed the return of Russia to the diplomatic front line on the issue.

Moscow has proposed an international conference of the leading Western powers and Russia on Bosnia, but Mr. Churkin said whether Tuesday's meeting would lead to such a conference was up to ministers.

Mr. Churkin told reporters: "We know now what we are doing, we are acting together."

Bosnian Serbs abandoned some artillery around Sarajevo when they pulled their heavy weapons out, U.N. officials said.

"The U.N. and NATO have decided to strike while the iron is hot," commented a U.K. officer here, who declined to be identified.

Tuzla airport has been closed by Bosnian Serb gunners since May 1992, but U.N. troops backed by air support could be used to reopen it if necessary following discussions with the parties on the ground, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has told the Security

(Continued on page 5)

Beidh mounts diplomatic drive after clashes at home

SANA (Agencies) — Southern officials mounted a diplomatic drive on Tuesday in the Gulf, after troop clashes at home which claimed at least eight lives despite a reconciliation accord between Yemen's rival leaders.

Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh, a southerner, met King Fahd in the Saudi capital, while his deputy Salem Saleh Mohammad met the Kuwaiti emir, Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, and called for ties to be restored.

They were the first such high-level visits since the 1991 Gulf war, when the conservative monarchies accused Yemen of siding with Iraq and Kuwait broke off relations.

Mr. Beidh later travelled to Oman while Mr. Saleh Mohammad went to the United Arab Emirates, where he said the tour was aimed at drumming up support for Yemen after the reconciliation signed on Sunday in Amman by Mr. Beidh and President Ali Abdullah Saleh, a northerner.

He said the vice-president

which have erupted since the deal, the envoy called on "all parties concerned to help remedy the situation and allow the return of stability."

But an Arab diplomat here, declining to be named, warned that the Beidh initiative could backfire and "aggravate the crisis of confidence between the president and his deputy."

But other sources said President Saleh and Vice-President Beidh both moved to end the fighting.

"President Saleh and Vice-President Beidh gave instructions to contain the incident and carry out a quick investigation of its ramifications," the spokesman told Yemen's official SABA news agency.

"The regrettable incident has been contained," he added.

Mr. Beidh is still refusing to return to Sanaa from his southern base of Aden, where he has taken refuge since last August, an official in the president's General People's Congress (GPC) said.

Referring to the clashes

(Continued on page 5)

Israel and PLO hammer out details of security agreement

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiators, hoping to reach agreement within two weeks on implementing their peace pact, debated security issues in talks Tuesday in Cairo.

Hassan Asfour, a member of the Palestinian delegation, told reporters that discussions focus on where Palestinian police posts will be located and how joint Palestinian-Israeli patrols will be carried out in the Gaza Strip and on roads linking Gaza to Jericho.

The Palestinians reportedly are seeking a force of 10,000 police, while Israel has insisted the size be held to 6,000 men.

Mr. Asfour declined comment on reports that Israel will release some Palestinian prisoners on "Eid Al Fitr."

"We are discussing the issue on principle," Mr. Asfour said. "We hope to reach an agreement on this subject soon."

Egypt's Middle East News

Sources close to the talks said the security committee was working on a timetable for Israeli troops withdrawing, for dismantling Israeli military installations and deploying the Palestinian police.

A separate group resumed work on details of transferring civilian authority from Israel to the PLO in Gaza and Jericho.

The two sides have tried to impose a news blackout on the Cairo talks but Palestinian sources said the negotiations were close to agreement on civilian affairs.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said the Cairo talks were making satisfactory progress, according to a report by Israeli army radio.

Jameel Tarifi, head of the PLO team on civilian affairs, said agreement was reached on land registration on Monday. He said both sides were ex-

(Continued on page 3)

Agency said that in addition to seeking freedom for some 3,400 Palestinian prisoners by mid-July, the Palestinians are demanding the repatriation of 68 people deported by Israel during the Palestinian uprising against occupation.

The issue of releasing prisoners is critical because PLO leader Yasser Arafat has said he will not sign a final agreement with the Jewish state until he has a schedule for their freedom in hand.

The talks, which began Monday, are expected to end with a news conference Wednesday. They will resume next week in the Egyptian resort of Taba, MENA said.

A security committee headed by Nabil Shaath for the PLO and Amnon Shahak for Israel had four rounds of talks since Monday. Members are drafting a detailed agreement on security arrangements that would follow an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza



Various phases of the restoration work at the Dome of the Rock (Petra photo)



Violence flares in Gaza City

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Palestinians launched four attacks on the Israeli army on Tuesday wounding at least one Israeli soldier, as troops opened fire hitting three Palestinians, a correspondent reported.

A grenade lobbed at a military post in the centre of Gaza City left one soldier hurt. Another grenade was thrown at the army base in the nearby Jabalia refugee camp without causing injuries.

Two Palestinian photographers for AFP and Reuters were detained for an hour and had their films confiscated after taking photographs. The army charged they were in a closed military zone.

Meanwhile, trouble flared at the Rafah camp on the border with Egypt where troops opened fire on stone-throwers and wounded one. Another was shot at Jabalia and a third at Beit Hanoun village in the north of the strip.

Masked men killed a suspected collaborator overnight pumping six bullets into 28-year-old Haitham Abdul Latif Zaku's head and chest in Gaza City.

No one claimed responsibility but activists of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) burnt his shop down a year ago.

More than 20 Palestinians have been killed by fellow Palestinians for allegedly collaborating with Israel during February alone and more than 1,000 during the six years of the intifada.

Jordan welcomes Saudi campaign to raise funds for Jerusalem

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan Tuesday warmly welcomed a decision by Saudi Arabia to launch a campaign to raise funds for the renovation of Islamic holy shrines in occupied Jerusalem as a constructive move taken during the Holy Month of Ramadan to enhance Arab and Islamic rights in the Holy City.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, made the statement during a visit to an exhibition at the King Abdallah Mosque featuring progress on the restoration of the Al Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock and other renovation projects undertaken by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian government and people view Saudi Arabia's decision with deep respect and appreciation, the Prince said, noting that Jordan had always been keen on maintaining close cooperation with Arab and Islamic governments to safeguard the holy places.

The Saudi Press Agency reported Monday that King Fahd of Saudi Arabia issued instructions to Prince Salman, the Emir of Riyadh, to lead a drive through all regions of Saudi Arabia for donations that "will be channelled to rehabilitate and slay the Islamic shrines in Holy Jerusalem."

The Saudi step will enhance pan-Arab solidarity and re-

flects King Fahd's keenness on protecting the Islamic holy shrines in Jerusalem, Prince Hassan said.

"We also view this decision as falling within the framework of a call made earlier this year by King Hussein urging the Arab and Islamic nations to protect their religious sites and assume their responsibility towards rehabilitating the Arab and Islamic character of Jerusalem," he said.

On Jan. 9, 1994, King Hussein named a Royal Commission for Jerusalem Affairs entrusting its members with the responsibility of rallying Arab and Islamic support to help keep Arab Jerusalem under Arab Islamic sovereignty.

next week, appointed committees would replace municipal councils whose terms end within three months from the approval of new legislation until elections are held for the country's 167 municipal councils later this year, parliamentary sources said.

Accordingly, observers said, the elected Islamist-dominated Zarqa Municipal Council could be replaced with an appointed committee.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Environment Ahmad Akaike told the Jordan Times Tuesday that a decision on the Zarqa municipal elections will be made within the legal period. But he would not say if the decision would be held on time.

Under the current regulations, people of Zarqa should go to the polls to elect a new municipal council on May 27 and the date for the elections should be announced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Environment "around three months," before the term of the incumbent council ends.

"We could announce a decision to hold the elections or not," he said.

Mr. Akaike said the draft law would settle the issue, adding that the new legislation addresses municipal elections

and that "new developments" could be created by tr.

Zarqa deputies have urged Mr. Akaike to hold the municipal elections, expressing their rejection of having a committee run the affairs of the city whose population is estimated at over half a million.

"It was appointed committees that destroyed the city because they were not elected and therefore not accountable to the electorate," said Dr. Omooush, member of the Islamic Action Front (IAF).

The deputies demanded in a letter they sent to the minister that the elections be held on schedule in compliance with the law.

Zarqa Deputy Abdul Baqi Jammo said he signed the letter upon reports that an appointed committee was to replace the council Wednesday. But "after investigating the issue, I found out that the reports are not true," Mr. Jammo, president of the Judiciary Committee at the House, told the Jordan Times.

"The country is celebrating

Fate of Zarqa municipal polls hangs in air

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Municipal elections for Jordan's second largest city could be postponed if a draft law on municipalities is passed before the deadline for announcing the polls falls on "around" Feb. 27, observers said.

But Zarqa Deputy Bassam Omooush said it would not be possible to have the draft legislation signed into law before Feb. 27, adding that indications are the elections would be held on time.

A Yemeni official said in Amman northern troops on Tuesday ambushed and killed 15 soldiers from the south.

The ambush was sprung by a northern brigade at Al Amalqa, based in the Abyan region of southern Yemen, the South Yemeni official said.

The arrests were the first in Jordan following revelations that the group was behind the Jan. 29 assassination of Jordanian diplomat Nayeb Imran Maayat in Beirut.

Mr. Maayat was shot at close range by a gunman as he was driving out of his garage to work. Two of three suspects arrested in the case have confessed to complicity in the killing and identified the third as the gunman.

Lebanese investigators have

informed the Jordanian government that the suspects were affiliated with the Abu Nidal group, which has denied any role in the killing.

His Majesty King Hussein, without mentioning names, said a terrorist group based in an Arab capital was involved in the assassination. Libya, where reports suggest Abu Nidal is hiding, denied having anything to do with the killing.

According to the security source, the arrests of suspected members of Abu Nidal's Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) were made Sunday, one day after an office in Abdali was raided.

Documents and leaflets belonging to the group were seized in the raid on the office, operating under the name "Asdoud" the source said.

"Investigations are continuing, and any further assertions will be premature," said the source.



Royal Highness Princess Basma Tuesday chats with residents of the Wadi Mousa area (Petra photo)

QAF donates JD8,000 in Wadi Mousa district

WADI MOUSA (Petra) — Royal Highness Princess Basma Tuesday accepted to give as the honorary president of Wadi Mousa Women's Society and announced a donation of JD5,000 from the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) to support the society's programmes and projects.

Princess Basma also donated JD1,000 from QAF purchase educational games and books for children in Um Sihon village, a Wadi Mousa sub-district.

The Princess, who was on a tour of Wadi Mousa and Karak, supervised the distribution of in-kind assistance to 603 families in Wadi Mousa, Taybeh and Um Sihon.

In her meetings with local communities in the Wadi Mousa area, Princess Basma stressed the important role of citizens in developing their communities by involvement in preparation and implementation of programmes provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

She expressed appreciation to citizens in this region for their active role in supporting the charity campaign, which seeks to provide in-kind contributions and support family rehabilitation projects.

In Karak, the Princess met with representatives of the various sectors and committees taking part in the campaign and reviewed with them the charity's objectives.

Princess Basma was accompanied by members of the national committee in charge of the charity campaign and senior government officials from Ma'an and Karak governors.

Another passionate performance by the French master of qanun



Julien Jalal Eddin Weiss studies of the Arabic music and the qanun. Trained with the greatest masters from Egypt, Iran and Tunis, he left out no academic subject and is now considered as a reference himself.

His Al Kundi ensemble performed last November in Paris at the Theatre de la Ville in what has been described by critics as a "miles-tone" concert.

The knowledge of Julien

Weiss Arabic culture, Islamic civilisation, customs and history makes him more than just a performer - a fully-integrated, original, oriented musician.

The concert at the Philadelphia Hotel is presented by the National Music Conservatory - Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in Amman.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of paintings by Rihab Ghassis at The Gallery Inter. Continental Hotel.

Art exhibition by artist Jalal Arigat at Ab'd Art Gallery (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. except Fridays).

Art exhibition by several artists at the Alia Art Gallery (8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.).

Plastic art exhibition by artist Khalil Al Kofash at the Yarmouk University.

Art exhibition by Iraqi artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (8:30 p.m.-midnight).

Computer exhibition at the Marriott Hotel.

Photo exhibition by artist Latifa Yousef at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Exhibition of medical herbs at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).

Book exhibition at the Jordan University for Women.

Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).

Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Oussouli at the French Cultural Centre.

Art and photo exhibition by several Arab artists at the Balqa Art Gallery in Fuheis (Tel. 720902).

Exhibition by Lebanese artist Hussein Madi at Durat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the

DRAMA

★ Drama in Arabic entitled "Hamlet Crucified Again" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

★ Film entitled "Dreams and Songs of the Noble Old" at the American Center at 2:30 p.m. (60 minutes).

LECTURE

★ Seminar on "Naturalisation and Passports Laws" by Mr. Mohammad Al Kharabsheh. Dr. Ali Kattar and Mr. Rifai Al Haraz, at the Amman Chamber of Commerce, in Shmeisani at 12:30 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

★ Poetry festival at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

★ A recital of traditional Arab music by French Julian Jalal Eddin Weiss and Syrian Sheikh Hamza Cbakow at Philadelphia Hotel at 8:00 p.m.

CHARITY BAZAAR

★ Charity bazaar at the International Exhibit Centre (9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.).

Crown Prince announces near completion of Dome of the Rock restoration project

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday announced that the renovation of the Dome of the Rock in Arab Jerusalem was nearing completion and said that the achievement of the work during the holy month of Ramadan bears a great significance for the Arab and Islamic world.

The Crown Prince was speaking during a visit to King Abdullah Mosque in Amman where he viewed a display depicting the progress on the restoration of the holy shrines in Jerusalem and similar work in Jordan on the various shrines at the tombs of the Prophet Mohammad's Companions.

The director of the restoration project in Jerusalem last month announced that the project, which is financed by His Majesty King Hussein, would be completed by the end of February.

Expressing his pleasure, Prince Hassan said that the renovation was carried out with the aim of strengthening Arab and Islamic rights in the holy city.

King Hussein had donated more than \$8 million to finance

the work carried out by the Irish construction firm Mivan.

The work entailed the refurbishing of the dome by covering it with gold gilded copper sheets supported by lead beams and the restoration of the roofs and installing a fire alarm system.

Voice appreciation to the Ministry of Awqaf and the special committee charged with carrying out restoration plans, Prince Hassan said that Jerusalem has a history of 3,000 years of Arab and Islamic rule and the completion of the work on its shrines will support Arab and Islamic efforts to protect their rights.

The Prince appealed to the Arab and Islamic countries to take appropriate measures to ensure the re-establishment of Islamic sovereignty over the city.

"In the name of His Majesty King Hussein I express appreciation of the role which the Ministry of Awqaf has been exercising towards restoring the shrines in the holy places and building shrines at the burial sites of Prophet Mohammad's Companions in Jordan," said Prince Hassan.

He also thanked the ministry

for taking charge of the Orphans Fund and conducting research in Islamic fields, urging the ministry to promote the collection of zakat (alms for the poor) in Jordan.

Prince Hassan toured the exhibition which displays 400 pictures of the holy places and different stages of construction work dealing as far back as 1952 when the first restoration in Jerusalem was carried out with funding from Jordan.

Prince Hassan was briefed by officials on the ministry's

plans to develop mosques and to supervise the annual pilgrimages to Mecca.

Accompanying the Crown Prince on the tour was Chief Islamic Justice Izz eddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi and a group of leading scholars.

restoration work on holy shrines in Jerusalem and Jordan (Petra photo)

Ministry to finalise draft on national health plan

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas Tuesday said the ministry was about to finalise the drafting of a comprehensive health insurance law and all of its 11 provisions.

Dr. Malhas said the law, which will benefit all sectors of the society, will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval at the beginning of April.

The law, he said, provides for the creation of a new establishment to be called the Comprehensive Health Insurance General Corporation, which will enjoy administrative and financial independence.

This corporation will have a board of directors to be chaired by the health minister, and will include as members representatives of the Royal Medical Services, the ministries of Health, Finance, Social Development and Labour, the president of the Jordan Medical Association, the president of the Private Hospitals Society, the dean of one of the medical schools in Jordan and three other members to be appointed by the Cabinet.

Dr. Malhas pointed out that the law also provides for the creation of a supplies and purchases department which will purchase equipment and medicine at lower rates than those of the local market.

The corporation's board of directors, he added, will be charged with drafting and drawing legislation for the comprehensive health insurance plan.

He concluded by saying that citizens will not be getting the health insurance services free of charge. Beneficiaries will have to pay the subscription fees provided for in the law so that they can receive the best health services, he said.

Also Tuesday, Dr. Malhas chaired a meeting of the Ministry of Health Grants and Projects Committee.

The committee heard a report presented by director of the ministry Planning Department Fuad Al Ayed on several projects carried out by the ministry, namely one aiming to expand the services of the mother and child care centres.

The projects carried out in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund, aims to reduce mortality rates in Jordan among mothers and infants.

The vessel, which earlier

reports said came from a European port, dropped anchor offshore where health inspectors kept it until they completed their investigations of its meat cargo, said Dr. Malhas.

The health authorities in Aqaba boarded the vessel and discovered that only the surface layer of the 54,000 cartons containing the frozen meat bore a label with an

expiry date of end of 1994.

The cartons beneath this layer, said the minister, clearly showed that the expiry labels were tampered with and that the expiry date was originally end of 1993.

Dr. Malhas said an unsuccessful attempt had been made to change the markings on these labels to end of 1994.

Earlier reports had said that the shipment was rejected by Egyptian authorities when the vessel attempted to dock at one of Egypt's ports, and that a Jordanian merchant had purchased the meat and changed the label on the lower cartons at sea.

"I have now referred the manifesto and the other paper-

Suspect Jordan-bound food to be inspected offshore, says Malhas

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas Tues-

day said health authorities will stop cargo vessels car-

rying food stuffs bound for

Jordan outside the port of

Aqaba whenever they suspect

the quality of the cargo.

"We will not allow such ships to enter into the port, but we will board them to ensure that they carry food fit for consumption in order to avoid any complications on shore," Dr. Malhas told the Jordan Times.

The minister was com-

menting on the discovery of a shipment of 1,300 tonnes of frozen meat meant for the Jordanian market which arrived at the port zone earlier this week. Jordanian autho-

rities found that most of the meat on board had an expiry date of end of 1993.

The vessel, which earlier

reports said came from a European port, dropped anchor offshore where health inspectors kept it until they completed their investigations of its meat cargo, said Dr. Malhas.

The health authorities in Aqaba boarded the vessel and discovered that only the surface layer of the 54,000 cartons containing the frozen meat bore a label with an

er provided by the ship's cap-

tain to the ministry's legal advisers to see if the merchant had breached Jordani-

an laws," said Dr. Malhas,

adding that the merchant in-

sisted that the meat was brought in for re-export to a

neighbouring Arab country.

"From now on we will not

allow suspected vessels to dock at the port, nor will we allow any discharging of the cargo at the free zone for re-export to an Arab country," the minister stressed.

His measure, said Dr. Malhas, will be taken in order to save the Jordanian authorities any headaches and complications.

The minister, who last

month accused merchants of continually abusing regulations and bringing in unsafe food, said that the ministry is determined to protect public health by all means at its disposal.

"For the time being, we wait for the decision of the legal advisers to determine whether the merchant had violated the law," added Dr. Malhas.

He said the health ministry would be forced to destroy the meat if it is found on Jordanian territory, but it would not reject a request by the merchant to return the cargo to its country origin.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King, Qatari leader exchange cables

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday sent a cable to Qatari leader Sheikh Khalid Ben Hamad Al Thani congratulating him on his assumption of constitutional powers and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the Qatari people further progress and prosperity. Sheikh Khalid also sent a cable to King Hussein congratulating him on the signing in Amman of the Yemeni reconciliation and reform agreement last Sunday. The Qatari leader expressed his heartfelt congratulations to King Hussein on the success of the Jordanian efforts and endeavours to overcome the differences between the Yemeni leaderships.

"While expressing our support for Your Majesty's efforts to heal rifts among Arab ranks and to unite the Arab fold and word, we implore the Almighty God to bless you with continued good health and happiness," Sheikh Khalid said. The King also received similar cables from Qatari Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalid Al Thani and Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament Nabih Berri. Also Tuesday King Hussein sent a cable to Sultan Hassan Al Bulqieh of Brunei congratulating him on his country's national day and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the people of Brunei further progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince hosts Iftar

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday hosted an iftar at Hussein Youth City in honour of the Amman Mayor and heads of municipal and village councils. The Crown Prince and his guests performed the Al Maghrib prayer. Prince Hassan outlined the important role played by these councils in rendering basic services to citizens. He called on them to work as service-oriented institutions whose aim is to help the public. Greater Amman Mayor Mamoud Al Abbadi expressed appreciation to His Majesty King Hussein for his support to the municipal and village councils.

Experts to finalise strategy on poverty

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Social Development is expected to finalise a national strategy on dealing with poverty by the end of March, according to ministry Secretary General Suliman Al Rousan.

Work on the national plan, which started in September 1993, was carried out by a team of experts from the ministries of Social Development, Agriculture and Planning as well as the University of Jordan and the Audit Bureau, said Mr. Rousan in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Tuesday.

The strategy is considered a tool to help the government, private organisations and philanthropic societies deal with poverty which is a continually growing problem in Jordan, said Mr. Rousan.

The experts have not only diagnosed the pockets of poverty and their regions in the country, but also put forth

Israel, PLO work on details

(Continued from page 1)

proposals to be adopted by the concerned authorities to deal with this issue at the national level, added Mr. Rousan.

Under this plan, it is hoped that efforts of the public and private sectors would be united in order to implement schemes over several years to stem the problem, he said.

A statistical bulletin released by the government last December said that by the end of 1992 the number of needy families living below the poverty line rose to 6.6 per cent of the total number of households, up from 1.5 per cent in 1987.

The strategy is considered a tool to help the government, private organisations and philanthropic societies deal with poverty which is a continually growing problem in Jordan, said Mr. Rousan.

The experts have not only diagnosed the pockets of poverty and their regions in the country, but also put forth

banking, insurance, fuel supplies and the environment.

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Oil in sanctions wheel

IT IS common knowledge by now that whenever Iraq gets closer to meeting its obligations under the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, new conditions spring up to frustrate its bid to end the international punitive measures against it. The addition of conditions in such cases is called, generally in the West, deliberate moving of the goalposts.

We have a better term for it: international blackmail. By this we mean that there are definite economic reasons behind the constant orchestration of new conditions against that Arab country. These reasons have roots in the world oil market glut.

There are several oil producing countries which would give or do anything to keep Iraqi oil out of the international market for the simple reason that oil prices have dropped considerably in the past few years and are hovering now about \$16 per barrel. Keeping Iraqi oil out of circulation would at least keep the already depressed prices where they are. The reintroduction of Iraqi petroleum products into the market stands to lower even further the current price ranges. The Arab oil producing countries alone saw their revenues drop from \$180 billion in the early eighties to a mere \$75 billion in 1993. And what applies to the Arab World applies also to other producers from various regions of the world. This is a colossal economic crisis, which would only be exacerbated by lifting the oil embargo on Baghdad.

The Western industrial countries, which count on the revenues of the oil producing countries to grease their economies by selling them more and more aircraft, tanks and guns, have a stake in keeping the pockets of these countries full and ready enough in order to be able to perform exactly such a task.

We would have thought there is a better way to stabilise the oil market than by continuing to punish the Iraqi people. Sooner or later, Iraqi oil will enter the market. It would be wiser and fairer if a global solution could be found for this problem based on sound economic considerations for both the exporters and importers of this basic commodity. The real issue now lies with OPEC countries themselves, which have not been able or willing to heed their own agreements. In the long run, a more equitable quota system could be applied that could satisfy the global economy in a balanced manner. Meanwhile, the persistent ostracisation of Iraq by the international community, even after it has gone more than 95 per cent of the way to meet its obligations, makes little sense besides being totally unfair and unjust. Gradual easing of the sanctions against Baghdad commensurate with the extent of its fulfilment of its international obligations must become the mainstay of the new policy towards it instead of the current arbitrary and unethical direction being followed now.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RAI Arabic daily Tuesday attacked as an irresponsible act a visit that U.S. ambassador to Khartoum made to southern Sudan. We condemn this action which was taken without approval from the Khartoum government, which is at war with the separatist rebels in the south, said the paper in an editorial. Indeed this action reminds us of the behaviour of the colonialist powers earlier this century and in the past when they wanted to impose their will on the people of the Third World, said the paper. The colonial powers seem still intent on imposing their will on the other nations of the world. Being the sole superpower after the demise of the Soviet empire, the United States is practising this role mainly against the Arab World, said the daily. We are not surprised, therefore, by the U.S. ambassador's actions because such behaviour is in line with the American mentality and reflects immoral and irresponsible acts, it added. The Americans, said the paper, fear no opposition from China and Europe, which are afraid to raise their voice in protest against American actions, it said. These actions, it said, are mainly directed against the Muslim world. If what the U.S. ambassador did was moral and acceptable, why don't the U.S. ambassadors around the world, particularly in Europe, visit the war torn Bosnia to investigate the slaughter of Muslims there, asked the paper. Why has the U.S. ambassador to Israel failed to make visits to the occupied Arab territories where the Israelis continue to slay defenceless Palestinians daily? The paper said that the U.S. ambassador claimed that he was going to the south to inspect a damaged church, and said that hundreds of churches were either desecrated or damaged by the Israelis and the Serbs without a finger being lifted by Washington or European capitals.

Controversy surrounds Nation of Islam

By James Zogby

ONCE AGAIN, a storm is brewing around Louis Farrakhan and his controversial Nation of Islam (NOI) movement.

The most visible component of the latest storm was a full page advertisement that appeared in a number of newspapers across the country. Signed by more than 100 U.S. religious, ethnic and civil rights leaders, the advertisement denounced the leadership of the NOI for "verbal attacks on whites, women, Jews, Catholics, Arabs, gays, and African Americans who criticise their persistently divisive message."

This recent round of attacks against the NOI was prompted by a speech given by Khalid Abdul Mohammad, the national spokesman of the NOI, on Nov. 19, 1993. In that speech, among other things, Mr. Mohammad:

— Denounced Arabs and Jews as "white imposers" who are "sucking the blood" of the "black nation and black community";

— called for killing all South African whites including women, babies, the crippled and the elderly. "We will" be said, "kill everything white that ain't right;"

— and referred to the Catholic Pope as an "old, no-good ... (white) cracker."

After a national outpouring of denunciations, including strong criticism from other African-American leaders, Farrakhan rebutted his national spokesman and stripped him of his position, saying that his speech was "vile in manner, repugnant, malicious... and against the spirit of Islam." But Farrakhan went on to "stand by the truths that he (Mr. Mohammad) spoke," and then attacked those who had attacked the NOI.

Far from quieting the storm, Mr. Farrakhan's rebuttal/reaffirmation of Mr. Mohammad's remarks gave new life to the controversy.

The most troubling aspect of this new conflict for Mr. Farrakhan is the threat it poses to his efforts to gain acceptance from mainstream African-American elected officials. That effort has been underway for about six months now, but achieved its high point last fall through a key public embrace of Mr. Farrakhan by the Congressional Black Caucus and respected African-American civil rights leaders like the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and the Reverend Benjamin Chavis, president of the NAACP (the nation's largest civil rights organisation).

The embrace was part of a larger strategy of mainstream African-American leaders to bring together all leadership elements in their community together in an effort to fight the problems of crime and drugs which disproportionately affect the African-American community.

But for Mr. Farrakhan, the embrace was the public relations coup he had long awaited.

After years of being relegated to the sidelines of African-American politics, the embrace represented for Mr. Farrakhan an unprecedented level of acceptance from mainstream leaders and came because of his NOI's work in fighting crime and drugs and promoting black self-help projects.

While Jewish organisations, long-time foes of Mr. Farrakhan's, reacted angrily to the African-American leadership's agreement to work with Mr. Farrakhan, the African-American leaders insisted on their prerogative to heal their community's internal rifts and to work for self-improvement.

The controversy that erupted over Mr. Mohammad's speech and Mr. Farrakhan's seeming endorsement of some of it's "hate-filled" message once again left Mr. Farrakhan in an isolated position as mainstream African-American leaders were forced to publicly criticise his message and shun the NOI.

To understand the origins of this current conflict and why it has become so great, it is useful to examine the historic role played by the NOI in the African-American community.

The History and Role of the Nation of Islam

The Nation of Islam was founded in the 1930's by an African-American who changed his name to Elijah Moham-

mad. Elijah claimed to have received a revelation to begin this faith from a person he called Fard Mohammad, whom he asserted was a messenger of God. Mr. Fard's message to Elijah was simple: He was to awaken "the black nation to the full range of the black man's possibilities in a world temporarily dominated by the blue-eyed white devils."

While the NOI uses the Qur'an and a great deal of religious terminology derived from Islam, its theology is quite unique and by any standard heretical.

Like other black separatist movements which emerged in the same period (and were apparently also inspired by Fard Mohammad), the NOI preached racial hatred and division. In fact, to justify their beliefs, the NOI teaches that all men were originally black until the evil scientist Yacub broke the will of God and created the mutant white species. The evil whites then came to dominate the earth and enslave blacks.

According to the theology of the NOI not only Jews, but Arabs also are part of this evil white race which has usurped all the world's wealth and power — and even Islam — from the black race. The "call" of the NOI is, therefore, simple: Blacks should wake up, recognise their true power, separate from white society and work to regain their rightful power and place in God's plan for the world.

Elijah's message proved quite attractive to many dispossessed blacks because it had both economic and political themes. The religion grew to include more than 250,000 believers in the late 1950's.

As the NOI grew, so did the mystique around Elijah. Reading the literature of the NOI suggests that Elijah himself was claiming to be a prophet of God and there are even intimations that he might be the Messiah.

Because the NOI's message was racial separation, it never supported, and even actively opposed, the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King. The NOI did not want equal rights; it wanted power and black separation, so it inspired and allied not with the civil rights movement but with the many black separatist, African cultural nationalists and militant black liberation groups (such as the Black Panthers) during the ferment of the late 1960's and early 1970's.

While the NOI never grew to the size of the NAACP or other civil rights groups, its influence among angry African-American youths was considerable.

When Elijah died in 1975 the movement underwent a dramatic shift. The NOI's national spokesman Louis Farrakhan was passed over for the group's leadership in favour of Elijah's son, Warith Deen Mohammad. Warith Deen changed the name of the group to the World Community of Al-Islam in the West, sold off most of the group's economic assets that had been built up by his father and moved to integrate the movement's followers with Sunni Islam.

Warith Deen was largely successful in his efforts to bring his community into the mainstream. Hundreds of thousands of African-Americans joined his call and began to practice orthodox Islam and integrated themselves into the larger Muslim communities in the U.S. Today African-Americans make up 40 per cent of the U.S. Muslim community.

After watching this change for close to three years, Mr. Farrakhan finally broke with Warith Deen in 1978 and restarted the NOI, declaring himself to be the true descendant of the racial separation theology of Elijah Mohammad. While Warith Deen can point to over 1,000,000 African-American orthodox Muslims, Mr. Farrakhan's movement numbers only about 25,000. But these numbers do not tell the entire story.

Mr. Farrakhan's appeal, like that of Elijah's, extends well beyond those who convert, join the movement and accept its discipline. With its message of black pride, anti-white anger combined with self-help and economic power, the NOI strikes a responsive chord in the hearts of millions of African-Americans.

One prominent African-American political scientist has described Mr. Farrakhan as "a measure of the depth of black alienation from white America." The more angry blacks are, the more successful Mr. Farrakhan will be. Ironically, the more that white leaders attack him the more popular Mr.

Farrakhan becomes in some quarters of the African-American community.

From 1978 to 1983 Mr. Farrakhan continued hostility towards black civil rights leaders.

But in 1983, Mr. Farrakhan asked black leaders to allow him to speak at the March on Washington to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Martin Luther King's historic 1963 march. While many Jewish and white leaders were outraged, the African-American civil rights leaders were delighted by the prospect that Mr. Farrakhan might be changing his tune and welcomed him to the march, hoping that in so doing they would achieve an unprecedented unity in the ranks of the African-American community.

But Mr. Farrakhan's appearance at the march and his brief involvement in 1984 in Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign turned out to be no more than a tactical ploy to expand his audience.

Once he revealed that his theology of racial hatred had not changed, the pressure from Jewish leaders and the anger and disappointment of black leaders resulted in a renewal of Mr. Farrakhan's political isolation. But while Mr. Farrakhan was isolated from the elites and political mainstream, his appeal among disaffected African-Americans increased.

So it is with the current controversy. As before, Mr. Farrakhan's latest effort to gain access to the mainstream of African-American leadership has been thwarted; and, as before, Jewish and white Christian groups have denounced his message of racial separation. But it is equally true that the controversy itself and the massive outpouring of public denunciations by elected officials and other leaders has only served to increase Mr. Farrakhan's appeal — and not only among the most dispossessed in the African-American community. The treatment of the NOI also creates resentment among many middle class and professional blacks who, while they reject Mr. Farrakhan's message, are also in a rage at the way the white media and political leaders have relentlessly attacked an African-American.

Other issues that could be explored with respect to the NOI include the role that the group has played in distorting the view that some Americans have had of Islam as a religion with a universal message and the role that the NOI has played both as a symptom and aggravator of the Black-Jewish split in U.S. politics.

With regard to the first issue, it is important to note that Warith Deen Mohammad was prominent among the mainstream and orthodox African-American Muslim community and has been able to define Islam in its true form. With an African-American Muslim chaplain in the U.S. military, an African-American Muslim invited to speak before the U.S. Senate and at President Bill Clinton's inauguration, orthodox Muslims are emerging as a force able to correct the image of Islam that has long been distorted by the followers of Elijah Mohammad.

The history of the Black-Jewish tension is a long and complicated one which I may treat in another article, but it would be important to note that the overwhelming and, at times, excessive reaction of American-Jewish leaders to Mr. Farrakhan's racism only seems to create a deeper resentment among many in the African-American community. In response to pressure from Jewish-American leaders, African-American elected officials will denounce Mr. Farrakhan's message, but they resent being forced to do so.

So long as tension and inequality remain a prominent characteristic of U.S. political, economic and social life, the anger that breeds the NOI will remain and there will be those like Elijah, Mr. Farrakhan and Khalid Mohamed who will find an audience receptive to their message of frustration and bitterness.

The writer is president of the Washington-based Arab-American Institute. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Egypt's grave challenge

President Mubarak is in danger of being overthrown by fundamentalists'

By James Adams

AMERICAN intelligence analysts believe that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt is in grave danger of being overthrown by Islamic fundamentalists, with catastrophic consequences for Western interests in the Middle East.

A classified intelligence assessment being drafted warns that Mubarak is likely to fall and his country slide into economic chaos and civil war if present trends continue.

The report, known as a National Intelligence Estimate, represents the collective wisdom of all American intelligence agencies. It suggests that Islamic fundamentalists will continue to make gains across Egypt, leading to the eventual collapse of the Mubarak government, which is the geopolitical linchpin of American policy in the Arab World.

The Mubarak government maintains that it has the situation under control, and it has accused the foreign media of exaggerating the problem. But the intelligence estimate makes clear that the Americans are in despair over the widespread police raids, torture of suspects, military trials and executions and refusal to deal with any of the underlying social problems that give the fundamentalists a political platform.

The gloomy American assessment dovetails with a classified Israeli intelligence analysis late last year which warned of Mubarak's shaky position and the consequences if he falls. Egypt is a key supporter of the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

A fundamentalist government in Cairo would nullify the peace agreement and scrap the Camp David peace accords between Egypt and Israel. It would also give a boost to Iran.

"There is no question of our



simply further alienate the militants and encourage their supporters, say analysts.

Deaths from the violence have risen sharply. In 1991, 96 Islamic militants and police were killed; in 1992 the number was 322 and last year 1,116. But the violence has broadened with the terrorists specifically targeting foreign tourists, six of whom have been killed.

The Islamic Group, the main terrorist organisation, this month warned: "We implore tourists and investors to leave the country because the next operations will be extremely ferocious. We are forced to this to defend our faith, the values we hold sacred and ourselves in the face of the lack of law and of human rights which the dictatorial Mubarak regime embodies."

Using a classic tactic of insurgency movements, the fundamentalists have tried, with some success, to create a parallel government. In the south of Egypt, where fundamentalists are strongest, teachers

have reintroduced the veil and imposed a more Islamic curriculum.

Islamic medical clinics, run by supporters of the fundamentalists, are spreading and replacing the state system. Fundamentalists have also taken over the organisations that control the medical, legal and engineering professions.

As control of such groups shifts to the militants so they expand their recruiting base, helped by hundreds of thousands of illicit tapes that are freely circulating throughout the country. These encourage their listeners to shun all Christians and to fight the government. Such tapes were a big weapon in the successful war waged in Iran by Ayatollah Khomeini against the Shah of Iran.

Because of the parallels with the Iranian revolution, Egyptian officials have insisted that the rise of fundamentalism in Egypt has been caused by Iran. In fact, fundamentalist movements in Egypt go back to the 1920s and have experienced a resurgence recently largely because the gap between the rich and poor in the country has widened.

Egypt is being seen as a test case for the success of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. Already, the government of Algeria is under siege from fundamentalists and can barely hold on as civil war consumes the country. There is already a fundamentalist regime in Sudan and if Egypt falls, analysts warn, there is a danger that the whole of north Africa could turn fundamentalist.

The Gulf states, which are also vulnerable, as their economies suffer the consequences of the overspending of the 1980s decade that saw corruption institutionalised and any concept of real democracy checked. The Sunday Times

East Asia's arms trade is going local

By Gerald Segal

LONDON — Britain's practice of selling weapons to Malaysia and Indonesia while being bought off the shelf; the rest will be assembled from kits or by coproduction. Taiwan's purchase of F-16s from America will involve a significant amount of work for the Taiwanese aerospace industry. Other states in the region are also using arms purchases from the West to lay the basis for an indigenous aerospace and weapons business. Malaysia's acquisition of FA-18s from the United States includes coproduction, as did Indonesia's order of F-16s.

Of course, sometimes the desire for indigenisation has its price. This was seen in South Korea's development of an anti-aircraft system that could not distinguish between friendly and enemy planes. But Western companies realise the risks of underestimating East Asian industry in its early stages. The region has a record of learning fast and then sending exports to the West and capturing significant slices of the market.

Arms manufacturers in the West are inclined to cooperate, especially European companies that are often shut out of the United States on national security grounds. The development of aerospace and defence businesses in East Asia has important lessons for the wider world. Total arms sales to the region will continue to fall, but that is not the part of the market to watch. Instead, increasing complex coproduction arrangements and co-ownership of defence companies are likely

Features



'A success story'

Through NHF's Women-in-Development project, Hafayes Obeidat rises from under the poverty line to the comfort of self-reliance

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — When Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) offered Hafayes Obeidat the opportunity to benefit from its medicinal herbs scheme in Irbid governorate, Ms Obeidat and her family were living under the poverty line on a monthly income of JD 50.

Four years later, this mother of five is earning a monthly income of JD 500 as a successful "business woman" in this small village in the north. Not only has Ms. Obeidat paid off her debts, but she is lending money to her relatives in the village and employing three people in their thyme gardens.

Before joining the NHF's Women-in-Development project, says Ms. Obeidat, her family was living on the meagre income that her then unemployed husband used to earn working odd jobs at the harvest season. To make ends meet, Ms. Obeidat used to borrow money from well-to-do friends and neighbours, especially at the beginning of the school year when she and her husband used to worry about how to provide for their five children with the books, uniforms and other requirements essential for them to continue their education.

All that began to change in 1989, says Ms. Obeidat, when the development efforts to NHF reached her village with the Women-in-Development project to which Ms. Obeidat and other rural women found an opportunity to work and help alleviate the suffering of their families.

"We could not believe that land could be so rewarding to those who harvest it," says Ms. Obeidat. But when the women federation branch in Irbid told "us that NHF is ready to provide us with all that is necessary to plant the land, we said we will give it a try to see if we can improve our lives."

NHF provided women with seeds, fertilisers, irrigation equipment and expertise to plant small areas of land around their homes with medicinal herbs such as thyme, sage and camomile. It also set up packaging centres to which women bring their produce where it is dried and packaged before it is marketed either as beverages or raw material for medicine.

Though they were initially apprehensive to having their wives work, Mr. Obeidat and his brother eventually devoted all their time to the family scheme, shouldering whatever responsibilities



Hafayes Obeidat watches the thyme saplings that she sells to other villagers

she started exploiting other areas of land to expand her little "business."

With the help of agricultural engineers from NHF, Ms. Obeidat succeeded in adding another dimension to her work: In addition to producing herbs that she had sold through NHF, Ms. Obeidat started to produce saplings that she sold to other women who became interested in the project.

"I have sold more than 160,000 seeds of thyme and other herbs to over 50 women in 18 villages," says Ms. Obeidat.

Ms. Obeidat even sold seeds to the Agriculture Directorate in Irbid, with her sales in four years amounting to over JD 16,500.

As the work expanded,

more people were needed to keep up with the increasingly growing responsibilities of her little enterprise. Ms. Obeidat's husband and her sister and brother in law became fully involved in the project. Two other women were employed and a handicapped man found a work opportunity when he started buying saplings from Ms. Obeidat and selling them to other women in other villages.

With enough liquidity available to the family, Mr. Obeidat decided to expand yet further and he leased extra areas of agricultural land that he and his wife used to plant trees as a long-term investment.

Though they were initially apprehensive to having their wives work, Mr. Obeidat and his brother eventually devoted all their time to the family scheme, shouldering whatever responsibilities

coming their way in terms of developing it, says Mr. Obeidat.

"Our life has improved a lot since we joined" the NHF project, says Ms. Obeidat. She says: "I send JD 1,000 to my son so that he can continue his education (at university in a neighbouring Arab country). So does my sister in law for her son." Ms. Obeidat says she also managed to finance the education of her daughter at a community college.

Ms. Obeidat is one of 500 women who have been benefited from the Women-in-Development project since it was launched in five villages in the north in 1989. The medicinal herbs scheme's initial phase included 27 gardens from which 53 women benefited directly.

Over 150 women and their families are currently directly involved with the scheme, which in 1992 yielded more than 10 per cent of Jordan's imports of thyme and sage.

Agriculture engineer Wafa Mazahreh says the scheme is "on its way to meeting the country's needs (of thyme and sage) after the area of the planted land rose to over 130 dunums."

Ms. Mazahreh says over 500 rural women and their families benefited from the schemes of the Women-in-Development project, which include bee keeping, rabbit raising, leather stitching and light shoe and garment production.

After joining these schemes, says Ms. Mazahreh, "women attained more social growth and contributed to the development of their communities. They became self reliant."

From Michael Jansen
in Quneitra

QUNEITRA, once a bustling cross-roads town, provincial capital of the Golan government, is now a national park visited by local tourists and foreign correspondents. At the entrance is a tall triangular monument commemorating the town's return to Syrian rule in June 1974 after seven years of Israeli occupation.

Like the empty modern port city of Famagusta in Cyprus, occupied by the Turkish army in 1974, Quneitra sustained very little damage during its capture in June 1967. Like Famagusta, it was a "ghost town" simply deserted by its inhabitants, its buildings and streets empty.

But a week before Quneitra's hand-over, under the Syria-Israel disengagement agreement, the Israelis blasted and bulldozed 90 per cent of Quneitra's houses and stripped and gutted all its public buildings — three mosques, three churches, administrative blocks, schools, cinema and hospital.

The collapsed houses, roof slabs tilting at crazed angles, bulldozed pillars of the shops along the main street, the burnt-out cinemas, the broken floor tiles in the shell of the Orthodox church constitute another sort of monument, a monument to man's inhumanity to man, to the practices now known, thanks to the war in Bosnia, as "ethnic cleansing." Israel never intended Syrians to return to their homes and lands.

In November 1974, Israel was condemned by the U.N. General Assembly for the "deliberate destruction and devastation" of the town.

Last week the Syrian offi-

By John Oweo-Davies
Reuter

MANADO, Indonesia — Hymns singling to the sound of guitars pervades the balmy night air of this remote but bustling northern city in mainly Muslim Indonesia.

Dutch-style churches with deep sloping red roofs dominate roads in well-ordered Manado, a city that takes pride in religious tolerance.

"We have no religious problems here. Christians and Muslims are all together. We never fight," said taxi driver Arthur Telew, a 60-year-old Presbyterian churchgoer.

This was echoed by a 24-year-old Muslim, an instructor in some of the world's best scuba diving territory around pillars of coral in dazzlingly clear waters.

"We tend to get together during Christian and Muslim festivals. The fact that 80 per cent of the people are Christian makes no difference," he

This was considered a "grave breach" of the Geneva Convention. A special committee which visited the town recommended that a commission should be established to "study the legal consequences" of Israel's actions. And if there is peace, Syria could claim compensation for this act of vandalism.

Before the Israeli occupation at about noon on June 10, 1967, Quneitra was a prosperous town with a population of 53,000. The province's 142 villages and hamlets had another 100,000 inhabitants.

Today three or four people, elderly survivors of six families who stayed during the occupation, and 40 to 50 fat-tailed sheep live in the two-thirds of Quneitra under Syrian control. Today 50,000 Syrians dwell in 10 raw cement box villages in the one-third of the Golan Israel returned to Syria when Quneitra was restored.

The one-third of Quneitra remaining under Israeli control is a no-man's land, mined and cut off by spike-rolls of barbed wire. In the two-thirds of Golan Governorate ruled by Israel 18,000 Syrians live in five villages clustered in the north below the slopes of the highest peak in the anti-Lebanon range, "Jabal Shakh" or "Mount Hermon," and 13,000 Israelis in 32 settlements, some of which were built on the ruins of Syrian villages.

There are at least 250,000, and perhaps as many as 350,000, Golan refugees living in Syrian towns and cities, a powerful pressure group demanding the return of their lands, if not their homes.

Last week the Syrian offi-

cial daily *Tishreen* reassured its government's traditional demand that the whole of the Golan must be returned to Syria as its price for peace with Israel. But this time the paper said that "every atom" of the Golan had to be returned.

This usage was adopted to counter the suggestion by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that he was prepared for partial "withdrawal" on the Golan, rather than "withdrawal from" the entire occupied area. The demand for a pull-out from "every atom" was a measure of Syria's frustration with the lack of progress in 27 months of negotiations.

Syria is feeling this frustration more than ever now because during the summit meeting between President Hafez Al Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton on Jan. 16, Mr. Assad defined for Mr. Clinton what Syria meant by "full peace" — "normal relations" including open borders, trade, an exchange of diplomats and tourism.

However, Israel failed to deliver the quid pro quo both presidents expected in terms of defining the extent of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. And, to make matters worse, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated subsequently that Washington would not press Israel to make concessions on the Golan; indicating that even defining its intentions would be too great a concession for Israel. On Feb. 15, the Syrian media, which had refrained from criticising the U.S. over its refusal to honour its promise and take an active role in peacemaking, said that "the people of the

region wait for Bill Clinton" to assume his responsibilities.

The Golan is important to Syria for three reasons. First, it is, of course, part of the national patrimony which no Syrian government would be prepared to cede.

Second, the Golan, a basalt plateau of 1,860 square kilometres, 80 kilometres long and 15 kilometres wide, overlooks the plain of Damascus to the east and the Galilee region of northern Israel to the west. Although Israel claims possession of the Golan is "essential" to its security because Syrian gunners, before 1967, used to shell Jewish settlements in northern Israel from the plateau, the Golan has far more strategic importance to Syria for Damascus is just one hour's drive, 67 kilometres, along a good road.

Third, the Golan is a well-watered farming area, producing apples and grapes in the north, grains in the centre and bananas, citrus and early vegetables in the south, near Lake Tiberias.

For Israel, water rather than security is of primary importance. The Golan is the catchment area for the Banias complex of lakes and rivers located in the panhandle at the top of Israel. The snows on Jabal Shakh-Mount Hermon feed Lake Tiberias and springs in the northern Israel.

In a report produced in 1991 by the Jaffee Centre at Tel Aviv University, Israeli experts demonstrated that Israel could withdraw partially from both the Golan and the occupied West Bank and still retain control over water resources in these areas. The

report was suppressed in October 1993 when its findings were published by *Zeev Haaretz*, in the Israeli daily newspaper, because both Likud and Labour governments did not want to give the impression that Israel was making plans for withdrawal.

The report made it clear that Israel intends to maintain control of not only rivers and lakes, but also underground reservoirs and the environment to prevent pollution of sources.

And not only in Syria, but in Jordan and Lebanon as well.

The report was accompanied by a map showing the line of Israeli withdrawal from all but the crucial central portion opposite the old international frontier. Such a partial, even if substantial, withdrawal is, of course, unacceptable to Syria which would be prepared to negotiate mutually advantageous arrangements for the sharing of water once Israel committed itself to the return of the whole of the Golan to Syria.

As the saying goes, "There can be no Arab-Israeli war without Egypt and no peace without Syria." This is certainly true today because Syria, Jordan and Lebanon have committed themselves to a "comprehensive peace" on the Arab front and "comprehensive," complete and detailed settlements on their local fronts. Unless Syria receives the Golan, there will be no peace. A Western diplomat says this fact had, generally, been accepted by the international community and that it was up to Israel to make its decision, a "hard" decision, because Israel has, so far, always, to echo the words of King Hussein, chosen land over peace.

Presbyterians, fear an influx of foreign tourists following a widespread government promotion campaign could harm religion.

"Tourism could be a religious problem, especially on the moral side. It will be a challenge for me," another pastor said.

Sulawesi, a 1,200 km-long island, boasts one of the world's richest collections of mammal, bird and marine life something on which tourist plannings want to capitalise.

The first recorded visit by Europeans to North Sulawesi was around 1520 when a Portuguese fleet looking for cloves and other spices arrived. It was followed by missionaries who set up Indonesia's oldest church, the Evangelical church of Minahasa.

Spaniards, from their colony in the Philippines, later exerted control over the Minahasa region, now in Manado's hinterland.

Tolerance pervades Indonesian city

low several centuries of Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch Domination.

Most of the rest of Sulawesi, bisected by the Equator, is 80 per cent Muslim, just below the figure for all Indonesia which has an estimated 183 million people.

Authorities have been trying to quell a separatist Islamic Rebellion in Sumatra's northern Aceh province, while they have bad a long-standing dispute with Batak Christians on Sumatra.

Manado, a city of 300,000 people surrounded by volcanoes and tropical forests, was called by 19th century British naturalist Alfred Wallace "one of the prettiest in the east." It lies at the northern tip of the strangely star-shaped island of Sulawesi, once known as the Celebes.

Christian traditions in the city and other areas of north Sulawesi, east of Borneo and south of the Philippines, fol-

get to know each other and build understanding.

Mr. Daua, of Chinese extraction, decided to join the church when he became the family breadwinner after his father died.

"All I wanted was to get money for my life. After getting money, I felt it was not everything. I felt an emptiness so I went into the church," he said.

People in Manado ascribe the religious harmony partly to the often-repeated official ideology of Pancasila, seen by Indonesian leaders as fundamental for unity in the diverse archipelago.

Pancasila's five tenets include "the belief in one supreme god" and "democracy through deliberation and consensus among representatives."

Some people in Manado, which has sizeable number of Roman Catholics as well as

Beidh mounts diplomatic drive

(Continued from page 1)

There was no confirmation from the north.

In the case of Mr. Ayyad, a former chemical engineer, prosecutors offered much evidence to support allegations he ordered chemicals, including tanks of hydrogen gas, believed used in the explosion.

He is also accused of sending the messages to the news organisations taking credit for the bombing.

Mr. Ayyad's lawyer argued that his client thought he was buying the chemicals for a legitimate business being started by friends. But there was no evidence presented during the trial about this business and the judge chastised the lawyer for "coming out with things which have absolutely no basis whatsoever in the record."

Four soldiers were killed and 10 wounded in the town of Lawdar, 100 kilometres northeast of Aden on Monday, diplomatic sources said.

Southern troops dispatched as reinforcements from the port of Mukalla fought for several hours with a northern brigade in a battle involving tanks and artillery.

Three other soldiers died Monday when northern forces attacked an administrative building held by southern troops in Zinjibar, 30 kilometres east of Aden, and the capital of Abyan province, the sources said.

Tension flared in Abyan after the president overturned the nomination of a local governor by Prime Minister Haider Abu Bakr Al Attas, a southerner.

A military commission was

Verdict uncertain in World Trade Centre bombing

By Gail Appleton
Reuter

NEW YORK — A federal jury will begin deliberations this week to decide who bombed the World Trade Centre, but it is far from certain whether all four defendants will be convicted.

Although investigators moved quickly to arrest the men for launching the devastating attack on New York's twin-tower complex, the fact remains that the evidence — particularly against two of them — is open to interpretation.

The jury is expected to begin deliberations just a few days before the first anniversary of the Feb. 26, 1993 blast that killed six and injured more than 1,000.

But prosecutors, hampered by a lack of eyewitnesses,

were forced to build their case on a complex chain of circumstantial and scientific evidence. Because of this, legal experts said the verdict could rest on whether the government convinced the jury during closing arguments that all of the pieces of the puzzle were a perfect fit.

The four men on trial are Mohammad Salamch, Nidal Ajaj and Mahmoud Abu Halima.

There are also two fugitives named in the case. Ramzi Yousef, who prosecutors allege is the mastermind of the deadly plot, and Abdul Ajaj.

Summations by defence attorneys are to end Tuesday followed by the government's rebuttal and jury instruction.

Last week, assistant U.S. attorney Henry Depippo gave a strong summation that

the time of the blast.

His lawyer, Austin Camprillo, argued that Mr. Ajaj could not have participated in the bombing because he was in prison six months before the blast and was not released until two days after the explosion.

Mr. Ajaj was arrested in September 1992 when he tried to enter the country on a flight from Pakistan carrying a false Swedish passport.

6 Economy

Japan lifetime employment system under pressure

TOKYO ((R)) — Ken-Ichi Kurogai, a senior official of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO), says whenever he reads newspaper headlines even the traditional lifetime employment system may be threatened.

"In this homogeneous country, the lifetime employment and seniority system has been developed as the most suitable labour tradition," Mr. Kurnagai said.

"Such tradition aiming to maintain the stability of the labour market should not be discussed emotionally at a time when Japan is struggling to get out of the recession," he says.

"The system is a kind of ideology aiming to be fair to all workers," Mr. Kurnagai added in a recent interview.

The reality of the lifetime employment and seniority system — in which workers are paid by corporate longevity rather than merit — is that only some 20 per cent of employees nowadays stay until retirement at the company they joined after college.

Several economists and critics say the lifetime employment system must change.

"It is not advantageous for workers to stick to the lifetime employment and seniority system unless there is a prospect that the economy will continue to grow," Taichi Nagaya, an ex-international trade and industry ministry official, wrote in a recent article on the issue.

Under the system, young workers are paid much less than they may merit. But if the company for which they work

faces business difficulties, their length of service at fixed low pay scales works against them, Mr. Sakarya argues.

This is because, if the company goes under or is forced to cut back, affected workers cannot expect higher salaries from another prospective employer because of the seniority system.

Indeed, middle-aged, white-collar workers are now the target of employment changes brought on by the current economic slowdown. They are often transferred to affiliated companies at lower pay rates or offered early retirement.

"Personnel costs are still increasing despite efforts to cut costs," Takeshi Nagano, chairman of the Japan Federation of Employers' Associations (Nikkeiren), told a recent seminar.

Japanese firms are estimated to have one million to three million of excess workers still on their payrolls even though their is no real work for them. The nation's unemployment rate would reach five to six per cent — it was just under three per cent in December — if those excess workers were cut.

"The priority should be put on ensuring job security... but I am concerned that companies may eventually make those excess workers redundant," Mr. Nagano said.

Japan's unemployment rate rose to 2.9 per cent in December, the highest level in six and a half years. Economists expect it to hit 3.5 per cent to four per cent later this year.

One company which is moving toward dismantling the life-

time employment and seniority system is Hoya Corp., a maker of optical glass and glass for semiconductor manufacturing.

A Hoya spokesman said last week the company is considering introducing of a new pay system based on merit rather than seniority, with the aim of ensuring profits even if sales growth is zero.

Hoya is also planning to tell employees aged 55 and above they have to choose between taking a 30 per cent pay cut or retirement.

Earlier, the major machine tool maker Okuma Corp. took the controversial step of cutting its retirement age to 56 from 60 to try to deal with slow business in the current economic situation.

Labour unions agreed with the decision but it was strongly

criticised by the labour ministry, which has urged Japanese companies to maintain the retirement age at 60 or above.

"The retirement age is not set down in law, but we have urged management to make efforts to set the age above 60 as the number of old people is growing," a ministry official said.

Japanese over the age of 65, according to published estimates, will account for more than 21 per cent of the total population in 2010 — up from 14 per cent at present.

"We asked Okuma to recover the age to 60 as soon as possible," the labour ministry official said.

Okuma said it would look at the situation but made no promises because of the business climate.

Indian bank workers to renew protests against privatisation

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Bank employees Tuesday threatened to disrupt transactions across India in a heightened campaign against privatisation and the closure of loss-making branches of state-owned banks, trade unionists said.

The trade unions are also seeking an upward revision of wages in the entire financial sector, be added after the committee had drawn up its protest campaign.

The committee also sought support of other trade unions, saying the protests should be the universal to force the government to "adopt a path of understanding" towards bank and insurance company employees.

New Delhi has opened up banking to the private sector in an effort to revitalise the moribund industry.

The government says that about 9,000 of the 54,000 bank branches in the vast nationalised sector are "chronically sick" despite attempts to revitalise them, but has assured trade unions there would be no large-scale lay-offs.

Employees, however, fear that growing computerisation and banking reforms would result in the closure of many state-run banks, which are plagued by complaints of inefficiency, unreliability.

Ranks of African urban jobless to double — ILO

LAGOS (R) — The ranks of Africa's urban unemployed could double to 28 million by the end of the decade, an official of the U.N.-backed International Labour Organisation (ILO) said. Vremuda Diejomah, ILO regional director, was quoted by the News Agency of Nigeria as telling a conference in Lagos the number of jobless people in urban Africa was expected to rise from 14 million to 28 million by the year 2000.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 23, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Despite minor annoyances in the morning, as the day progresses, you will be able to handle whatever mental or business problems that come up in an effective manner. Think constructively.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This would be followed by two days of agitation in May, in addition to a number of other forms of protests to be launched from next month onwards, the forum of several of trade unions said.

"The stepped-up campaign is being launched in view of the

government's attitude on privatisation, closure of banks, insurance offices and branches," committee chairman P. Lakshmi Narasabha said.

The trade unions are also seeking an upward revision of wages in the entire financial sector, be added after the committee had drawn up its protest campaign.

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LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Improve the foundation of your life so you can have added abundance in the days ahead. Get rid of annoying conditions so you can have peace of mind.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Iron out any problems with others in a tactful and careful manner. See the company of congenials in the evening and have pleasant times.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have to use careful thought in handling monetary affairs today. Use your intuition for best results.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Use a different attitude in handling a puzzling situation and you get better results. Relax in the company of good friends tonight.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You have hidden desires that need more study before you pursue them. Strive for increased happiness with the one person you are fond of.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Some of your friends may have problems so be a helping hand. Show others you have practical wisdom in any situation which comes up.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Obtain important information about a project you are interested in before you go ahead with definite plans. Use your wisdom and ingenuity.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you handle routine duties in a more up-to-date way, you get more benefits. Study a new plan before making any changes.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't neglect important tasks early in the day. Try to cooperate more with fellow associates. Strive for more harmony.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Take care you don't take on any heavy expenditures of money in the evening. Allow time to engage in creative activity so that you can have happiness.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Postpone going ahead with a new interest you have in

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Asia-Pacific region to become world's largest aircraft market

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Asian airlines are expected to acquire about 3,000 planes valued at \$245 billion by 2010, making the Asia-Pacific region the world's largest market for commercial aircraft, according to U.S. manufacturer Boeing.

Dick Albrecht, executive vice president of the Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, the world's leading aircraft manufacturer, said his company was very active in Asia, negotiating with several countries, particularly Japan and South Korea, to jointly develop small commercial airplanes.

Speaking at an aviation conference sponsored by the Financial Times, he warned countries wanting to develop their own aviation industry that competition was tough in an already-crowded field.

Boeing commands 60 per cent of worldwide sales for aircraft of over 100 seats, with fellow U.S. manufacturer McDonnell Douglas at 10 per cent. European consortium

Russia assures GATT economic reforms go on

GENEVA (R) — Russia Monday told the chief of the GATT international trade body it was determined to press ahead with economic reform to ease its entry into the world trading system.

An official statement from GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, said the assurance was delivered by Foreign Economic Relations Minister Oleg Davydov at a meeting with Director General Peter Sutherland.

In this region, China and Japan represent the potentially largest markets, with Japan needing 600 aircraft (\$60 billion), and China requiring 800, often smaller, planes (\$40 billion), said Mr. Albrecht, describing China's "appetite" for new aircraft.

For example, Mr. Albrecht said Boeing was only producing 21 aircraft per month now, compared to 39.5 a month in 1992, and is preparing to go down to 18.5.

In this region, China and Japan represent the potentially largest markets, with Japan needing 600 aircraft (\$60 billion), and China requiring 800, often smaller, planes (\$40 billion), said Mr. Albrecht, describing China's "appetite" for new aircraft.

Russia formally applied for membership in June last year. The GATT statement said that in talks with Mr. Sutherland Mr. Davydov stressed that his country "fully intended to pursue its economic reforms in order to facilitate entry into the multilateral trading system."

The old Soviet Union was never a member of GATT, often denounced by Moscow's previous communist rulers as a capitalist club created to maintain the West's domination over developing countries.

Analysts uniformly blamed the self-interest of corrupt politicians for Mr. Xirimbimbi's dismissal and the reversal of his reforms.

But the desperate need for foreign credit has made financial reconstruction unavoidable, the financial advisor said.

Last year, the government ran up a record \$5.9 billion deficit and defaulted on \$5.9 billion in scheduled debt repayment.

Nearly all the \$3 billion in petroleum revenues from Angola's oil rich Cabinda enclave have been diverted toward fighting the war against UNITA.

Former Finance Minister Solomon Xirimbimbi was fired last March three weeks after launching an almost identical reform plan that had won high marks from world credit institutions.

The government said the plan had been pushed through without approval, but financial

forces would be spent on the armed forces.

MEA turns down \$150 million Kuwaiti offer

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Middle East Airlines (MEA), Lebanon's financial strapped national carrier, has turned down a Kuwait Airways Corp. offer to sell it five passenger jets as part of a \$150 million package, MEA said Tuesday.

Chairman Abdul Hamid Fakhouri told the Associated Press that the Kuwaiti proposal to sell his company the Airbus A310s was made earlier in the month.

"We've agreed it's out of the question," he said.

He gave no reason for MEA's rejection of the Kuwaiti offer or disclose any details of it.

But Beirut's conservative Al Anwar daily reported Tuesday that the Kuwaitis had offered to sell the A310s for \$24 million each and to loan MEA \$30 million for operational costs and spare parts.

The money was to be repaid from the revenue generated by the Airbuses in monthly installments over 10 years at an annual interest rate of six per cent.

Kuwait Airways is revamping its fleet in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war and is buying new A310s and A300-600Rs to replace its older Airbuses.

MEA survived the 1975-90 Lebanese civil war relatively intact, one of the few state institutions to do so.

But it was bit hard during the conflict. Beirut International Airport, the airline's base, was repeatedly closed during the fighting and was out of action for a total of 2½ years.

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Fiat unions accept loss of 16,500 jobs

ROME (AFP) — Fiat managers and trade unions have agreed on a new plan for shedding about 16,500 jobs within the company but without forced departure, the two sides said Tuesday.

The agreement was reached during Monday night at the end of four days of intensive talks. The plan put forward by management had been drafted with help of Labour Minister Gino Giugni.

But the main engineering workers' union, the FIOM-CGIL, which is close to the former Communist Party, retained the right to consult its members during the next days before giving its final approval.

The other unions, the FIM-CISL, the UILM-UIL and the FS-SMIC, signed the document.

Under the agreement 6,600 people are to take early retirement, 4,100 to be laid off, and 8,600 are to enter into special terms of employment permitting 3,500 of their jobs to be retained.

The company undertook to develop a car, with state help, designed to reduce damage to the ecology. Research for this was estimated to cost 450 billion lire (\$265 million).

The negotiations on the reduction of employment had begun in September and had been interrupted on Jan. 16 because the trades unions held that the plan proposed initially by management did not provide sufficient social support.

UAE to enforce intellectual property law next month

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will in March enforce laws to protect intellectual and industrial property, warning that strict measures will be taken against violators.

The move follows pressure from the United States, which says it is losing billions of dollars in the UAE and other oil-rich Gulf states due to piracy in trade involving books, tapes, computer software and other products.

A special department for the protection of intellectual property has been set up at the finance and industry ministry and it will begin operations at the end of March, a ministry official said Tuesday.

The department will provide protection for intellectual property, including patents registered for the first time in the UAE on those which are registered abroad and overseen by the UAE," the under-secretary for industrial affairs, Jaafar Al Fardan, told Al Khaleej newspaper. "The establishment of this unit will resolve differences with other countries on intellectual and industrial property."

It will also boost confidence in the local market and strengthen the economy as it will restore discipline to the market and stop imitation and

fraud," he said.

The project follows the introduction of trademark protection laws last year after intensive negotiations with the United States.

U.S. officials held more talks in the UAE last month on industrial property and said such laws were needed to prevent losses and increase trade between the two sides.

Washington has also urged other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to enforce protection laws. Most members have trademark or industrial property laws but they are incomplete or not strictly enforced.

The United States has said the absence of such laws was hindering trade with the region and was inflicting losses on U.S. companies worth over \$2 billion a year.

The problem has prompted it to place the UAE and other Gulf states on the watch list, which bars some of their exports to U.S. markets.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE — are among the leading markets for U.S. products, with imports of more than \$9 billion a year.

Gulf Arab exports to the United States, mostly crude oil, exceeded \$15 billion in 1992.

U.S. central bank chief suggests further increases in interest rates

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States is facing its best economic prospects in decades, but higher interest rates will be needed to keep inflation at bay, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said Tuesday.

In the Federal Reserve's semiannual report to the U.S. Congress, Mr. Greenspan defended the central bank's decision to boost short-term interest rates earlier this month to keep the administration wanted to keep interest rates low.

Paul Kanjorski, chairman of the subcommittee, said that it was clear that stock and bond traders, not to mention members of Congress, had been extremely unsettled by the agency's decision.

He termed the agency's decision to increase its target for the federal funds rate, the interest that banks charge each other, from three per cent to 3.25 per cent, as a slight change that in no way threatened the current recovery.

Indeed, he said in testimony before the House Banking Subcommittee on economic growth that the central bank's action was taken to "preserve and protect the ongoing economic expansion by forestalling a future destabilizing buildup of inflationary pressures... we viewed our move as low-cost insurance."

It was vague in the timing of any future rate hikes, saying, "I cannot, however, tell you at this time when any such rise would occur." He said that the Federal Reserve

would continue to monitor economic developments closely in timing its rate increases.

The White House had no immediate comment on Mr. Greenspan's testimony, but spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said before his appearance that the administration wanted to keep interest rates low.

The continuation of low interest rates has helped get the economy going again," Ms. Myers told reporters. "We hope that long-term interest rates stay low."

Many private economists believe the central bank will boost short-term rates by a quarter point at least once every three months through the rest of the year, continuing the pattern of gradual rate changes that has been a hallmark of the Federal Reserve under Mr. Greenspan.

In its reports, the central bank predicted that the economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, would expand at a moderate pace of around three per cent to 3.25 per cent this year, with consumer prices rising by about

three per cent.

Both forecasts are in line with predictions of the Clinton administration and many private economists.

While long-term interest rates have risen slightly since the agency's move on Feb. 4, Mr. Greenspan suggested that the markets may be unduly concerned that the economy was growing too fast in the final three months of the year.

He said the economy was already showing signs of slowing from that unsustainable rate, which some private forecasters say could have hit seven per cent.

Speaking of the favourable combination of moderate growth and continued low inflation, Mr. Greenspan said, "the outlook, as a result of subdued inflation and still low long-term interest rates, is the best we have seen in decades."

Even with the United States enjoying the lowest inflation rates since the mid-1960s, Mr. Greenspan took a tough line about the future, saying "when it comes to inflation expectations, the nearer zero the better."

Kuwait advises local bank reform

day.

"We'll advise that you are in a position that you are really in need to do something for your bank, increase your capital base, change your management, think about merger, think about foreign participation or better management practice."

Sheikh Salem Abdul Aziz Al Sabah said some bank managements had improved in line with his "step by step" drive to raise standards, while others still had room for improvement.

The whole question of reform was entirely up to the banks and the central bank would not interfere, but it would advise, he said in an interview with Reuters Sun-

stagnant earning due to the problems and losses linked to Iraq's 1990/91 occupation.

Economists say some are over-staffed and credit discipline has sometimes been lax.

Since Kuwait's 1991 Gulf war liberation from Iraqi occupation, Sheikh Salem has called some of the shorter strings by enforcing of international accounting standards, capital adequacy requirements and credit concentration standards.

The cabinet in December passed a bill allowing citizens of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to own up to 49 per cent of local banks.

This bill and proposals to allow non-GCC banks to own

Air Canada losses remain substantial

MONTREAL (AFP) — Air Canada, the largest of Canada's two financially troubled major airlines, has announced that it recorded a net loss of \$26 million (\$241 million) last year. This translated to 4.23 dollar (\$3.15) per share and compared to the 1991 loss of 454 million dollars (\$336 million) on 6.13 dollars (\$4.5) per share. More than half of the 1992 losses — 187 million dollars (\$130 million) — was attributed to "significant one-time provisions, including 60 million dollars for the GPS Group aviation leasing company, 31 million dollars for Air Canada's share of the Gemini Partnership Computerised Reservations System which is to be dissolved this year, and staff reduction provisions totalling 76 million dollars. On the plus side, Air Canada reported improved revenues and reduced operating costs last year.

Air Canada losses remain substantial

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S. African right set on boycott despite spate of concessions

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — The conservative Freedom Alliance appeared determined Tuesday to boycott the country's first all-race election despite a spate of concessions on its demands for a federal South Africa.

Alliance Chairman Rowan Cronje said increased powers for the country's nine new provinces, approved at a special sitting Monday of the multi-party negotiating council, did not go far enough.

"The powers look more suited to local government," Mr. Cronje said of the latest concessions, which further limited central authority over provincial administrations.

The Alliance — the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the white right-wing Afrikaner Volksfront and the Bophuthatswana black homeland — says it will boycott the April 26-28 election because it believed the constitution to come into effect after the vote is "fatally flawed."

Ed Tillet, an IFP spokesman, said he would comment only after his party's Central Committee had studied the latest so-called concessions.

President F.W. De Klerk, meanwhile, was scheduled to meet Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini in Pretoria later

Tuesday, the king's spokesman said.

It will be the fourth meeting in five weeks between the two men and the first since King Zwelithini, at a session in Durban on Feb. 14, demanded the restoration of his kingdom in its pre-colonial boundaries.

Mr. De Klerk has been trying to persuade the king, a close ally of IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, to accept the constitutional compromise and encourage his supporters to join the democratic process.

An official announcement Tuesday said South Africa's white-dominated parliament would reconvene in Cape Town next week to enact the latest compromises — despite the Alliance's lukewarm reception — as amendments to the constitution.

A senior member of the parliamentary secretariat said legislators would debate the amendments Monday and Tuesday, with the session possibly lasting through Wednesday.

The compromise was outlined by African National Congress (ANC) President Nelson Mandela last week, and immediately endorsed by Mr. De Klerk.

The negotiating council re-

convened to approve the package, which gives provinces stronger federal guarantees and provides for a double-ballot election system that will allow voters to choose, if they wish, the lists of separate parties for the national and regional parliaments.

The council approved an additional concession to the alliance: An amendment allowing provincial laws to pre-empt national legislation and guaranteeing that the central government will not diminish the powers of the provinces.

To allow negotiators extra time to reach agreement, the council also amended the electoral act to extend, until March 4, the already expired Feb. 12 deadline for parties to register for the election.

Chief ANC negotiator Cyril Ramaphosa said Tuesday that the alliance now had no excuse not to participate in the poll.

"We've actually given them an arm and a leg," Mr. Ramaphosa said in a radio interview.

Chief government negotiator Roef Meyer said after the amendments were approved late Monday that all the demands the alliance had made in December had now

been addressed.

An upsurge in political and criminal violence, in which at least 51 people have died since Saturday, lent urgency to efforts to reach an all-inclusive settlement.

More than 14,000 people have been killed since President De Klerk started to dismantle apartheid in early 1990.

The leader of the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, Ferdi Hartzenberg, said formation of the Volkstaat did not guarantee Afrikaners a white homeland.

"We are not going to take part in the election. It is the most important pressure mechanism we can exercise because if so many peoples don't take part, then it's just another proof that there's no solution," he said in a television interview.

ANC leaders have said they were willing to negotiate with the Conservatives, but have stated there could be no compromise on the basic principles of racial equality and majority rule.

Mr. Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party and one of the key members of the alliance, reaffirmed at a rally Sunday that he would boycott the election.



The International Atomic Energy Agency Chairman of the Board of Governors Ronald Walker (centre) presides over a meeting to discuss the North Korea nuclear issue. Present with Mr. Walker are General Secretary Hans Blix (left) and Governor Muttusami Sanmugaotha (AFP photo)

Seoul optimistic on nuclear inspections

SEOUL (AP) — South Korea said Tuesday it was optimistic the Communist North would keep its promise to allow the inspection of seven nuclear sites if the West did not press for further concessions.

North Korea, under potential threat of U.N. sanctions, last week backed down from a year-long refusal and said it would let International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors into plants where the West suspected nuclear arms were being developed.

But Pyongyang's insistence that inspections should begin apologetically to Washington riposte that it would insist on "inspection first," talked later, cooled initial optimism that a breakthrough was imminent.

"The North is worried that the IAEA and the world are demanding more than what it has agreed to," said a senior Seoul government source, who asked not to be identified.

"That is why the North

wants talks with the United States together with the inspections," he said.

North Korea's agreement last week with the IAEA does not include two sites that experts say are crucial to determining whether Pyongyang is making atomic bombs.

Gaining access to those sites is supposed to be a focus of senior-level talks between the United States and North Korea that Washington now wants to delay until after the IAEA inspections have started.

Meanwhile North Korea's ambassador to China, Cho Chang-Jun, has been recalled to Pyongyang for consultations as the issue of nuclear facilities in North Korea remained deadlocked, the South Korean News Agency Yonhap reported Tuesday.

Washington has been leading a diplomatic effort to defuse the crisis over Pyongyang's suspected atomic bomb project by wooing North Korea off the nuclear route through promises of diplomatic normalisation and trade links.

The Seoul government

source said Pyongyang wanted to ensure the world understood the extent of inspections to which it had agreed and did not want to be pressured about the two additional sites.

In a complicated statement, North Korea said Monday it was not agreeing to ad hoc or routine inspections under the IAEA's normal procedures.

It said it had merely agreed to "inspection proper to the specific status of (North Korea) after its temporary suspension of its declared withdrawal from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT)."

The statement said.

Meanwhile North Korea's ambassador to China, Cho Chang-Jun, has been recalled to Pyongyang for consultations as the issue of nuclear facilities in North Korea remained deadlocked, the South Korean News Agency Yonhap reported Tuesday.

Yonhap, quoting diplomatic sources in Beijing, said Mr. Cho had returned to Pyongyang "mid-February" to discuss the nuclear issue and the impending visit to China of South Korean President Kim Young-Sam.

Pakistan on Kashmir

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's parliament sent a bands-off-Kashmir warning to Pakistan Tuesday, accusing Islamabad of fanning a violent Muslim guerrilla war in the disputed

country will be resisted by India by all necessary means."

The resolution was adopted

without discussion as members

of the youth wing of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress (I) Party

staged a demonstration near the Pakistani embassy here.

Some 200 activists chanted

anti-Pakistan slogans and burned Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in effigy at the demonstration organised to protest Pakistani backing for Kashmiri Muslim guerrillas, witnesses said.

The parliamentary resolution, adopted by a show of hands by MPs from all parties

said: "Any attempt from any quarter to interfere in the in-

ternal affairs of India will be met resolutely."

It was the latest salvo in a bitter verbal duel between the two countries, which have fought two wars over Kashmir since the subcontinent won independence from British rule in 1947.

Pakistan holds the northern third of the Muslim-majority state, whose Hindu Maharaja joined India after the sub-continent's partition into India and Pakistan.

Tensions between the two neighbours have increased since Muslim militants in the Indian-controlled southern two-thirds of Kashmir launched an armed struggle for secession four years ago.

6,000 students injected with fake vaccine

BEIJING (AFP) — Police in China's central Shaanxi province have arrested two doctors who injected nearly 6,000 university students with a fake hepatitis vaccine, the China Daily reported Tuesday. Sun Shujuan, head of Shaanxi Teachers' Institute Hospital, and Cheng Jingjie, head of Shaanxi Epidemic Prevention Station, injected the vaccine into 5,851 local students, the report said. Other reports said Dr. Sun had bought the ineffective vaccine at a knock-down rate of 14 yuan (\$1.6) per capsule from Ma Hongqiang in the northeastern city of Changchun and charged 18 yuan per shot to students at the beginning of the new term at Shaanxi universities. He made a profit of 10,200 yuan, according to the China Education News. None of the students had suffered any adverse side-effects thanks to precautionary measures taken to protect their health once the scam was uncovered, the report said.

Trial sought for Jose Carreras in Italy

ROME (R) — Italian prosecutors Monday sought a trial for Spanish tenor Jose Carreras and 22 others following a probe into alleged overspending at Rome's loss-making opera.

State television said Rome prosecutor Pier Filippo Laviani wanted Carreras, one of the world's most famous tenors, to be tried on allegations he overcharged for performances at the Rome Opera in 1992. The request for a trial must be approved by senior magistrates.

Mr. Laviani alleges Carreras submitted claims in excess of his agreed fee of 30 million lire (\$17,640) and travel expenses of 10 million lire (\$5,882). Italian news agencies added, A Rome judge will rule on March 14 whether Carreras and his co-defendants, who include director of the Rome Opera Gian Paolo Cressi, should be committed for trial. Mr. Cressi, at the centre of the investigation into the opera's finances, stepped down Monday after Rome Mayor Francesco Rutelli demanded he resign.

Australian spies said to work against Australia

SYDNEY (R) — Australia has rejected calls for an inquiry into allegations its spies worked for Britain's MI6 in operations that compromised Australia's interests.

Two unidentified former members of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) told Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Four Corners television programme Monday the service needed to be made accountable for its actions.

The allegations sparked calls for a judicial inquiry into ASIS, an organisation in existence for four decades but only made public in 1977.

"The only way to get to the bottom of the allegations is to have an independent inquiry, preferably of the judicial type," said opposition lawmaker Andrew Peacock.

As Australia's foreign minister between 1975 and 1980, Mr. Peacock was responsible for ASIS.

But Foreign Minister Gareth Evans Tuesday rejected calls for an inquiry. "There's a need to trust the minister with a thing like ASIS," Mr. Evans told a ruling Labour Party caucus meeting Tuesday.

The two spies made a number of allegations in hacking their call for more accountability and an inquiry into ASIS.

"These people know that they will never be scrutinised," said one spy who had been trained by Britain's MI6 in 1976.

French right infights over presidential polls

PARIS (AFP) — French conservative politicians are fighting among themselves to be candidate of the right in presidential elections scheduled for May, 1995, forgetting a pious pledge to unite behind a single leader.

The infighting began in earnest Monday when former President Valery Giscard d'Estaing announced his Union for French Democracy (UDF) would present its own candidate. The centre-right UDF is junior partner to the Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) that trounced the Socialists in last March's legislative elections.

Mr. Giscard d'Estaing, 68, who did not specifically state he would stand, thus reneged on an agreement with practically all the right-wing parties to hold "primaries" to agree on a single candidate.

Such "primaries" would inevitably have led to selection of a candidate from the RPR, the biggest party in parliament, analysts said, but would have avoided a damaging contest in the first round of the presidential. The second round is fought by the two best-placed candidates after elimination of the rest.

But the RPR is also split, with Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, 64, and RPR creator and President Jacques Chirac, 60, bidding to be candidate.

The conflict is not yet in the open, but has been increasingly limited as by supporters of one or the other, and takes on a new dimension after a sharp fall in Mr. Balladur's popularity, indicating that his exceptional ten-month honeymoon period could be over.

Mr. Balladur remains

EU inches closer to enlargement deal

BRUSSELS (AFP) — European Union (EU) ministers moved a step closer to bringing Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden into the union here Tuesday by making a new offer on development aid.

European affairs ministers offered annual aid of 175 million ECU (\$192 million) to under-developed areas in Finland, Norway and Sweden — 10 per cent less than they had asked.

But the EU ministers were still battling to reach compromise over access to fisheries resources ahead of meetings later Tuesday with their counterparts from the four applicant countries.

An all-party resolution unanimously adopted by both houses of the legislature asked Pakistan to stop its support for the campaign and vacate the northern third of Kashmir it holds.

It voiced India's resolve to "firmly counter all designs against its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Kashmir, it said, "has been, is, and shall be an integral part of India and any attempts to分割 it from the rest of the

country will be resisted by India by all necessary means."

The resolution was adopted without discussion as members of the youth wing of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress (I) Party staged a demonstration near the Pakistani embassy here.

Some 200 activists chanted anti-Pakistan slogans and burned Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in effigy at the demonstration organised to protest Pakistani backing for Kashmiri Muslim guerrillas, witnesses said.

The parliamentary resolution, adopted by a show of hands by MPs from all parties

said: "Any attempt from any quarter to interfere in the in-

Broad-based government to be formed in Rwanda despite minister's murder

KIGALI (AFP) — Rwandan politicians prepared to set up a transitional administration including former rebels Tuesday, despite the overnight murder of a government minister and street protests against the plan.

The EU ministers prepared to resume negotiations Tuesday after breaking up after midnight Monday without agreeing on an overall strategy with which to confront the applicants.

EU officials said Finland and Sweden were closest to reaching a compromise over membership terms, with Austria and Norway posing greater difficulties.

favoured by the coalition's biggest force, the SDP.

SDP Secretary General Wataru Ichikawa is advocating three blocs in Japan's political sphere of influence — the LDP, an alliance between Shinseito and Komite, and a coalition among the SDP, the DSP and Sakigake.

The daily predicted that Hosokawa's fresh proposal would affect a planned cabinet reshuffle.

Mr. Hosokawa told the lower house Budget Committee Monday he intended to go ahead with the reshuffle shortly, after the government formally works out a compromise bill on disputed anti-corruption measures.

Mr. Hosokawa has reiterated his call for Japan to review its basic defence policy in view of the vastly changed international situation, press reports said Tuesday.

Speaking at a meeting of the Budget Committee Monday, Mr. Hosokawa said Japan's basic defence policy had changed little in the nearly 20 years since its adoption.

"In the new era, we need to consider again from the basics, including what our basic defence forces should be," the Nihon Keizai Daily quoted him as saying.

Mr. Hosokawa's proposal marks a shift from his previous calls for having a multi-party system in Japan and shows his inclination to have a two-party system, which is also favoured by Shinseito and Komite, the Mainichi said.

The Mainichi said in a front-page article that the move was aimed at combatting the largest opposition group, the Liberal Democratic party (LDP), at the next elections.

However, the proposal runs counter to the views of Sakigake leader and Chief Cabinet Secretary Masayoshi Takeuchi, who favours a multi-party system which is also

favoured by City Polytechnic. "In the end, the governor's hill will go through."

Mr. Patten introduced the first part of what he calls "modest" reforms in December, shortly after seven months of Sino-British talks on his original October 1992 proposals broke down in acrimony.

He said the government wanted to see a large portion of military land handed back for redevelopment to maximise benefits for ordinary people.

Britain has already started withdrawing its troops from Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, legislators are set to debate and approve Governor Patten's democratic reforms Wednesday, but in the long run, few in Hong Kong believe the changes will matter very much once China takes back the British colony in 1997.

The long-awaited debate of stage one of the reforms which Mr. Patten first put forward 16 months ago — to thunderous outrage from Beijing — is likely to run well into the night.

But political analysts agree that the proposals should go through with few if any changes, despite a threatened motion to defer it in the hopes that Britain and China might still resume talks on the drawn-out issue.

<p

Admiral steers Spurs to NBA best record

MINNEAPOLIS (R) — David Robinson scored an NBA season-high 50 points late Monday and Dale Ellis added 20 to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 114-89 win over the Timberwolves.

The admiral, as Robinson, a graduate of the U.S. naval academy is known, steered San Antonio to a franchise record 13th straight win as the Spurs raised their season mark to 39-14 — best in the league.

Robinson celebrated being named player of the week for his heroics of the previous seven days by shooting 18-of-22 from the field and 13-of-15 from the free throw line.

Minnesota led 53-52 with 9:30 to play in the third quarter, but the Spurs outscored the Timberwolves 17-2 to take the lead 69-55 and never looked back.

San Antonio's Dennis Rodman collected 20 rebounds. Isiah Thomas scored 25 points, while Doug West and Chris Smith each scored 15 points in a losing cause. Minnesota's Christian Laettner sat out due to a one-game suspension stemming from an incident during Sunday's practice.

Coach Sidney Lowe kicked Laettner out of practice following a heated exchange between the second-year player and assistant coach Bob

Weinhauer.

At Utah, Karl Malone scored 23 points and John Stockton added 22 to lift the Jazz to a 119-92 win over the road-weary Philadelphia 76ers, losers of their fifth straight on a five-game swing through the western conference.

The Jazz led 21-19 with 4:25 left in the first quarter, then went on a 10-0 run to close the period, opening a 31-19 advantage that gave them firm control of the game.

The win enabled the Jazz to keep pace with the first-place Spurs in the midwest division. The third-place Jazz remained five games behind San Antonio, with the second-place Houston Rockets — idle Monday — one game out of the lead.

In Chicago, Scottie Pippen scored 30 points, grabbed 12 rebounds and keyed a game-opening run as the Bulls charged by the Charlotte Hornets and back into the win column 118-93.

The Bulls scored the first 10 points of the game, led by Pippen's six, and were never headed.

The victory snapped Chicago's longest losing streak of the season at three games.

In Phoenix, Charles Barkley scored 23 points and Dan Majerle sparked a third-quarter

surge to help the Suns defeat the Sacramento Kings 112-86.

Dan Majerle scored 13 of his 21 points in the third for the Suns, who carried a scint 51-49 lead into the third quarter before outscoring Sacramento 39-18.

In Detroit, Jamal Mashburn Scored 11 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter to power the Dallas Mavericks to their first road win in over 11 years over the Detroit Pistons, a 98-88 triumph.

The win was only the seventh of the season for Dallas and was the Mavericks' first in 10 tries dating back to Dec. 12, 1982. Mashburn scored six of his 11 fourth-quarter points in a 8-0 Dallas run late in the quarter.

Miami moved a game over the .500 mark by improving to 26-25, while the Bullets lost for the 10th time in 12 games.

The Bullets played without rookie guard Calbert Cheaney, who injured his left heel in a loss to the Nets Sunday.

Don MacLean led Washington with 18 points.

Steve Smith contributed 21 points and 10 assists for the Heat, who led wire to wire.

Harding-Kerrigan turn into sideshow — for the moment

HAMAR, Norway (R) — The Tony Harding-Nancy Kerrigan main event becomes the sideshow Wednesday as women's figure skating itself finally takes its rightful place under the Olympic spotlight.

For seven weeks the world at large has been obsessed by the incessant furor stemming from the attack on Kerrigan during the U.S. championships in Detroit Jan. 6.

Was Harding involved? She insists not. Would she compete? A no. The U.S. Olympic Committee eventually said yes.

Would she bug Kerrigan? Fat chance. Would a knee injury force her out? No way.

All of that gets thrust aside as the two Americans and 25 other hopefuls set out in pursuit of perfect combination jumps and error-free skating in the demanding and punitive technical programme Wednesday night.

The dark-haired Kerrigan with the toothpaste-smile has practised well in Hamar since recovering from the knee bruising inflicted on her by the man welding the metal rod in Detroit.

Kerrigan, 24, has also lost weight but she is looking even more the sleek, stylish skater than ever. She is edging closer to the top of the podium.

who

is likely to be among the leaders Wednesday.

A bronze medalist in the 1992 Olympics and a silver in that year's worlds mask the fact that her free skating at both events left much to be desired.

At last year's Prague worlds, it disintegrated completely as she slipped from first to fifth with a display which was only ninth best on the day.

But a season of double and triple run-throughs of her programmes has added consistency to her flowing, balletic style.

Harding, 23, is less predictable. At her best, she is a powerful, dynamic skater but her best has not been seen much lately.

Her ankle, sprained Dec. 24 and re-injured two weeks ago, troubles her and there has been pain in practice.

But treatment has rendered it stable and doctors said Tuesday it should not affect her ability to perform.

Oksana Baiul of Ukraine comes to the competition as the world champion and if anything she is even more artistic that she was as a mere 15-year-old winning so endearingly on her first attempt in Prague.

Italy scores dramatic upset; Germany wins team ski jumping

"I wanted to stay behind him and have an opportunity to pass him in the last 50 metres... but he's so fast I had no chance," said Dahlie.

Norway, the defending champion, had to settle for silver. Finland took bronze.

Tuesday's victory was sweet revenge for the Italians who were runners up to the Norwegians in the 1992 Albertville Games and in last year's world Nordic ski championships.

It was Italy's second cross-country gold and second upset victory on the Birkebeineren cross-country course. A week ago, Manuela di Cenio beat the Russian favourite, Lyubov Egorova, in the women's 15-kilometre cross country.

Dahlie had hoped Tuesday to join Egorova and Sovjet speedskater Lydia Skoblikova as the only six-time Olympic champions. Egorova won three golds at Albertville two years ago and three more here in Lillehammer. Her sixth came Monday in the women's 20-kilometre relay. Skoblikova competed in the 1960 and 1964 games.

Dahlie will have another chance at gold in Saturday's 50k, in which he is defending champion.

"I'll give it a good try," he said.

Though the race may have been bad news for Norway, Dahlie saw it as a plus for cross-country skiing.

"I think we disappointed four million Norwegians today.... maybe some of them broke their TVs," the Norwegian national hero said. "But we did our best... made good entertainment. It was good promotion for cross-country skiing, I think."

Duelng Dahlie in the niptuck anchor leg of the men's 40-kilometres cross-country relay, Italy's Silvio Fauner quickstepped into the lead with slightly more than a kilometre left. The 26-year-old Dahlie, a double gold medalist in these games, put on his famous kick nearing the finish line but could not overtake his 25-year-old Italian rival.

"Dahlie, Dahlie, Dahlie," the Norwegian fans had

Russian team head blasts judging at figure skating

LILLEHAMMER (AP) — The head of the Russian team Monday called some of the judging at the Olympic figure skating "crazy" and asked the republics of the former Soviet Union to return to "civilized relations."

Singing out Ukrainian judging, Russia's team leader Valentin Sych said the political tensions between the two were reflected in the scoring for Russia's skaters.

The psychological situation is such that if a Swede wins, that's perfectly all right. But if a Russian wins, then it's a Russian," and judges accordingly.

Sych complained at a news conference.

"That seems to be a typical reaction from the former republics," he said though an interpreter. After competing as the Soviet Union until the 1988 games, the former republics formed a united team for the 1992 Olympics. In Lillehammer they are competing as separate teams under their own flags.

Sych said his criticism wasn't limited to figure skating judges, but he didn't specify any other sports.

In ice dancing, Russian journalists noted, the Ukrainian judge placed Russians Oksana Gritschuk and Yevgeny Platov fourth in the original dance, pushing them into third place overall going into Monday evening's free dance.

Ukraine also stood alone with Britain in giving Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean a perfect 6.0 for their technical programme.

"I got together with the Ukrainians and talked to them and said 'Let's sit down and be reasonable and stop this crazy way of behaviour,'" said Sych.

Relations have been tense between Russia and Ukraine ever since the Soviet breakup. "We can understand certain tensions, but the athletes certainly cannot," said Sych.

"We should turn the page and create civilised relations between us and them," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Table tennis world champion to retire

SEOUL (R) — World singles champion Hyun Jung-Hwa said Tuesday she would retire from competition next month and become a trainer. "I have been playing for 14 years now and I am quite sad about retiring. But I have done my best and have no regrets," Hyun told a news conference. "I will continue studying and after retiring next month, I will become a trainer," she said. Coach Chung Kwang-Ho said Hyun's retirement was a great loss for South Korea. "She was the best. We wish she would stay on but we respect her wishes."

The coach said, Hyun won the singles title at the world championships in Sweden last year, beating Taiwan's Chen Jing in the final. The 24-year-old Hyun also won the women's world doubles title in 1987 with Yang Young-Ja and the mixed doubles crown in 1989 with Yoo Nam-Kyu.

Mayor: Lillehammer should host 2010 games

LILLEHAMMER (R) — Lillehammer should apply to host the Winter Olympics again in the year 2010, the town's mayor and deputy mayor said Tuesday. "This would be the best after-use of the Olympic arenas," mayor Audun Tron said, backed by deputy Odd Arve Lien. Lillehammer organisers have been widely praised for the games so far, held in sparkling winter weather. If the International Olympic Committee (IOC) ever decided to cut back on new hosts, Lillehammer could become one of a select group of towns hosting future games, they said. St. Moritz in Switzerland, Lake Placid in the United States and Austria's Innsbruck have also hosted the winter games twice.

Olympic flame barbecue news to the police

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (AP) — Word has it that people have been using the Olympic flame at the ski jump above Lillehammer for clandestine cookouts. "A good story," said Olympic police spokesman Alf Andersen. "But it's nonsense." The story has surfaced repeatedly in Norwegian media. "We have looked into it, without finding anyone who could confirm it. There were supposedly pictures of it out there somewhere, but we haven't seen them. They don't exist," said Andersen. Anyone wanting to singe hot dog in the sacred flame now would need a ladder, stilts or a roasting stick that is about 25 metres long, said Roger Andreassen, another police spokesman. He said the flame holder is more than 20 metres tall, and that the stairway used by Norway's Crown Prince Haakon to light the flame was removed shortly after the Feb. 12 opening ceremony. "If someone did use the flame to cook, the military guards on duty did not report it, the police did not report it and no one seems to have seen it," he said.

QPR chief denies sale rumours

LONDON (AFP) — Queens Park Rangers chairman Richard Thompson has denied rumours that he is about to sell the English premiership for £15 million. The rumours arose after manager Gerry Francis revealed that his offer to stay as manager of QPR for one more year had been turned down by Thompson. But Thompson, the premier league's youngest chairman at 29, branded the rumours about the club's future ownership as speculation. "Fears for its stability are entirely groundless," he added. "I've committed an increasing amount of my time to the club in order to make it successful both on and off the field. I intend to continue those improvements in the future and that includes those to the stadium and our staff," he said. "I've been waiting for Gerry to decide if he wishes to commit himself to QPR, or perhaps even leave football, something he told us and our fans was a possibility when he first became manager and has since reiterated to the press," he added.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♦KQ9 ♦A10842 ♠103 ♣A94
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1C Pass 1♦ Pass
2+ Pass 2 NT Pass

What action do you take?
A.—To invite game partner must make some 11-12 points, and since the invitation was issued in no trump, probably only four spades.

You're side-effect prime points and good intermediates justify on acceptance by bidding three no trump.

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♦K98765 ♦762 ♠10754 ♣642
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?

A.—Shame on you for thinking we're trying to trap you! You don't have much of a hand, so be content with the safest response by bidding spades, which asks partner to pass. If you play transfer bids, transfer to spades and pass.

Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♦KQ9 ♦A10752 ♠KJ2 ♣A2 44
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1+ Pass 1+ Pass
2+ Pass 2 NT Pass

What action do you take?
A.—Even though partner almost certainly does not have a four-card heart suit, you are strong enough to rebid. Since two hearts is your natural, descriptive bid, we see no

'King Koss' turns down statue offer

LILLEHAMMER (R) — Norwegian hero Johann Olav Koss has turned down a government offer to erect a statue of him in the Viking ship speed skating arena where he won three Olympic golds and smashed three world records.

"A statue of me? Give the money instead to Olympic aid," he said after completing the historic hat-trick Sunday. "King Koss" himself gave a \$30,000 victory bonus to Olympic aid, a charity helping war victims in Sarajevo.

Norway's Culture Minister Asle Kleveland proposed putting up a statue of Koss beside one of Hjalmar Anderson, 70, reversed in Norway as the king of speedskating after winning three golds in the 1952 Oslo Games.

Kleveland said the government would reconsider its plans after Koss' refusal.

"Of course we won't do something that Johan Olav Koss doesn't like. We just wanted to mark the fact that we now have two great skating kings in Norway," she said.

Koss was swamped by superlatives after shattering his own 10,000 metres world record by almost 13 seconds Sunday. The daily Dagbladet dubbed him "superman" on its front page.

"He is not like us. He is from another planet," Dutch rival Rintje Ritsma said.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli secret service uses minors as agents

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's Shin Beth secret service can recruit minors without telling their parents, in exceptional cases, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has told parliament. "In certain rare and exceptional cases, minors can be recruited by the Shin Beth to prevent violent acts which threaten human life," Mr. Rabin said in a written response to a parliamentary question. "The Shin Beth does not go to the parents to take authorisation when it is using agents," added Mr. Rabin who is directly responsible for the General Security Service (Shin Beth). The question from Deputy Eliezer Zandberg of the Tsomet Party followed a report in the *Yediot Aharanot* newspaper that a 16-year-old boy had infiltrated the anti-Arab Kadi movement. He reported back on Jewish extremism centred on the settlement of Kyrat Arba, near the West Bank town of Hebron. Mr. Rabin did not mention if Palestinian minors were recruited by the Shin Beth whose intelligence operations centre on Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and counter-espionage.

Former rival to Assad freed after 25 years

AMMAN (AFP) — A one-time rival of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, General Ahmad Al Suwaydani, has been freed after spending 25 years in jail, a former inmate said here Tuesday. Mujaali Nasrawi, a Jordanian who used to be a member of the Baath Party which ruled Syria and Iraq, told AFP that Mr. Suwaydani was freed on Monday for health reasons. Himself released from a Syrian jail last year after 22 years, Mr. Nasrawi had called Saturday on Damascus to free Mr. Suwaydani, expressing fears he might die in Mazzeh prison after having suffered an attack of hemiplegia. Mr. Suwaydani was army chief-of-staff on the side of Salah Jadid, whose Baath Party faction clashed with Mr. Assad's in the late 1960s. At that time Mr. Assad was air force chief under President Nureddin Al Attasi. In 1968, Mr. Assad overthrew Attasi to take over as president. Attasi was freed in April 1992 and died last December in a Paris hospital. While Jadid died last August in a Damascus jail. Some 20 political prisoners have been in jail in Syria for more than 20 years, most of them arrested during Mr. Assad's coup, according to international human rights groups.

Military burial in Israel without a rabbi

TEL AVIV (AFP) — For the first time since Israel was founded in 1948, a Jewish soldier has been buried with full military honours without a religious ceremony led by a rabbi. Leading secular campaigner Shulamit Aloni, minister of communications and head of the left-wing Meretz Party, declared a victory in the struggle against "religious coercion." The parents of soldier Oded Rabinovitch, who died in a road accident on Saturday, are both Meretz activists and decided to tackle the religious establishment to respect their son's wishes. He was buried on Monday in a Jerusalem cemetery at a funeral attended by his comrades in arms but no rabbis were present. A relative recited the Jewish prayer for the dead, the Kaddish. "Everyone has the right to choose the type of ceremony the wants at burial," Ms. Aloni said Tuesday. "That is a part of religious freedom. Those who are religious should not try to impose their views on the rest of society."

Israel frees seven Lebanese fishermen

TYRE, Lebanon (R) — The Israeli navy has freed seven Lebanese fishermen whom it seized off the coast of South Lebanon, security sources said Tuesday. They said Israeli officers interrogated the fishermen, who were detained on Monday from three small boats off the port city of Tyre, before setting them free several hours later. It was the second time in one week that the Israeli navy has detained fishermen off Tyre. Five were held for several hours by the Israelis on Feb. 15 but freed after being interrogated. The Israeli navy regularly patrols the coast off South Lebanon to guard against seaborne commando attacks by Palestinian and Lebanese guerrillas.

Sudan leader appoints ministers in states

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's head of state Omar Hassan Al Bashir has completed a reorganisation of his country by decreeing the appointment of 143 ministers in the 26 states he created earlier this month. Last week he appointed the governors of the 26 states. The appointments, published in a decree read out on state television on Monday night, appear to be aimed at promoting unity in Sudan, gripped by civil war between the north and south. Last week General Bashir broke with the tradition when he appointed a southern Sudanese as governor of one of the 16 states in the north. On Monday Gen. Bashir decreed the appointment of nine Southern Sudanese ministers in the north and nine northern Sudanese ministers in the south.

Parliament approves Mirsalim nomination

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's parliament on Tuesday gave a vote of confidence to the new Islamic Guidance Minister Mostafa Mirsalim, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said. It said out of 224 deputies at the parliamentary session, 178 voted for, 27 against and 19 abstained. Mr. Mirsalim was named as culture and Islamic guidance minister by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani last week in a cabinet change prompted by the sacking of Mr. Rafsanjani's brother from the top job at state radio and television. A French-educated engineer, Mr. Mirsalim, 47, was made adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei — now Iran's supreme leader — during his time as president from 1981 to 1989. The guidance ministry's responsibilities range from overseas Islamic publicity to supervising the print media and cinema, tourism and arranging the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Indonesians launch anti-American demonstration

JAKARTA (AFP) — Up to 2,000 Muslim youths staged an anti-American demonstration in front of the U.S. embassy here Tuesday, accusing it of involvement in drug trafficking and of anti-Muslim policies. "We demand an apology from the U.S. government over the involvement of its two diplomatic staff in the crime of drug trafficking," said members of the group, which claims to belong to the Front for Indonesian Youth Saviour. One leader, haranguing the crowd through a megaphone, said the United States was influencing Indonesian youth with what he called a destructive culture, was unfair towards the Muslim World and was always forcing its interests on others. "America, out... America, AIDS... America, narcotics..." the crowd yelled, as well as calling for the hanging of the two embassy staff. The crowd, which according to police estimates numbered 2,000 people, delivered a statement to the U.S. embassy. The embassy's spokesman was not available for comment.

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Kidnap creates backlash against Afghan refugees

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Afghan refugees, long welcome in Pakistan, may soon find their numbers limited and their movements restricted, a government official said Tuesday.

Interior Secretary Jamshed Burkhi's warning came amid increasing anti-Afghan sentiment brought on by the kidnapping of some 70 schoolboys by three gunmen from Afghanistan. The gunmen were killed by commandos Monday night in Islamabad after a 40-hour ordeal, and the boys were unharmed.

But the incident struck a raw nerve. Many Pakistanis said they were fed up with the two million Afghan refugees, some of whom arrived from their war-torn homeland more than a decade ago.

Qamar Abbas, a member of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's party, demanded the Afghans be expelled.

"We gave them shelter for 14 years and this is how they pay us back? They kidnap our children," he said.

The kidnappers brought the schoolboys to Islamabad on Sunday after hijacking their bus in the northwestern city of Peshawar, the area where most of the Afghan refugees live. While the hostage crisis was still unfolding Monday, there were anti-Afghan demonstrations in Peshawar.

Mr. Burkhi told a news conference that the government was reconsidering its policy which allows the refugees to

roam freely in the North-West Frontier Province, the territory that borders Afghanistan.

He said security had been tightened at refugee camps and acknowledged the anger many Pakistanis feel towards the Afghans.

"Tempers were already high after the highjacking," he said. "If God forbid, any harm would have come to the students it could have been explosive."

Mr. Burkhi said the government had no plans to forcibly expel Afghan refugees, but the government will encourage repatriation and has made clear that it no longer intends to take in new arrivals.

The mountainous Pakistan-Afghan border has never been tightly controlled, and tribesmen have long crossed back and forth freely.

Mr. Burkhi also said the three bus hijackers were trained guerrillas who claimed they had an Afghan organisation behind them.

Mr. Burkhi, who during the 40-hour hostage drama had conducted three bouts of negotiations, said the gunmen told him: "We are not alone. We have an organisation behind us."

The Pakistani government is "very much concerned to find out who is behind them," he told the news conference.

The exact identity of the Farsi-speaking Afghans from northern Afghanistan's Par-



Officials inspect the bodies of three Afghan gunmen after they were shot dead during an operation by Pakistani commandos Monday. The gunmen were holding six Pakistani schoolchildren hostage in the Afghan embassy, after hijacking their bus (AFP photo)

wan and Bamian provinces was not yet known, but their behaviour showed they were trained guerrillas.

The position the Afghans adopted during the talks and the way they tore their weapons indicated they were "tactically trained," Mr. Burkhi said.

The 12 elite army commandos carried out their mission against the three Afghans with "great precision," he said. The remaining hostages were rescued "safe and sound," and the hijackers were killed.

Officials decided to go with the rescue operation when it became apparent that the fatigued hijackers, carrying pistols and hand grenades, were likely to resort to "some desperate action which could endanger the lives of the children," he said.

Afghan Ambassador Sardar Mohammad Roshand was "taken into confidence" before the operation was launched, he added.

The interior secretary added that the main obstacle to an agreement with the hijackers was their demand for \$5 million and several government officials as "substitute hostages."

The gunmen had insisted that Pakistan provide them with a helicopter, so they could return to Afghanistan with the government officials.

They also demanded that Pakistan provide food supplies to famine-threatened Kabul, the Afghan capital, and ensure the food convoys' safe passage through territory controlled by Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

International watchdog sees Jordan press still under curbs

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Despite tangible progress brought on by the democratisation process and its influence on the freedom of the press, the current Press and Publication Law is still the source of worry to international public freedoms advocates who are interested in Jordan and in the region.

The International Centre Against Censorship's Article 19, just has seen a representative to Amman, and his report is likely to include calls for further revisions of the law to combat what its organisation considers as basic violations of the freedom of expression.

"The law emerged in particular circumstances that no body was ready for and where the Parliament was overloaded with laws to be amended," he said.

On the other hand, the absence of guarantees (political and legal), the lack of encouragement and the weight of the past (marital law) were charging the atmosphere with frustration at the time the law was passed, and that was the main source of inertia felt by journalists, preventing them from lobbying for their rights, he said.

"They didn't understand the proper role of journalism as a watchdog and as a fourth estate," he added. "They just looked at the past and compared it with the little freedom they achieved this time around."

According to Mr. Essoulam, the responsibility of raising people's awareness of their rights and stepping up efforts to promote public freedoms should be shouldered also by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and human rights groups in the country. He pointed to the lack of publications on this issue which are direly needed at this stage.

He said that journalists and writers should raise the banner of freedom and step up efforts to promote public freedoms should be shouldered also by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and human rights groups in the country. He pointed to the lack of publications on this issue which are direly needed at this stage.

According to Mr. Essoulam, the law, enacted in May

1993, was not sufficiently discussed nor was it given ample time for proper revision. He pointed to the many restrictions imposed by the law on the work of journalists and on the press in general saying that another comprehensive and detailed revision of the legislation is a prerequisite to a genuinely free press.

In his assessment, the Press and Publications Law was enacted at the wrong time. On the one hand, people were not fully ready for such a piece of legislation and the Parliament was overloaded with debating and passing other laws "which rendered proper discussion of all of the law's provisions impossible."

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On the other hand, the absence of guarantees (political and legal), the lack of encouragement and the weight of the past (marital law) were charging the atmosphere with frustration at the time the law was passed, and that was the main source of inertia felt by journalists, preventing them from lobbying for their rights, he said.

"They didn't understand the proper role of journalism as a watchdog and as a fourth estate," he added. "They just looked at the past and compared it with the little freedom they achieved this time around."

Despite the emergence of the two new daily privately-owned newspapers (*Al Aswaaq* and *Al Akher Khabar*) as well as partisan newspapers, Mr. Essoulam pointed out that the government still owns the majority of shares in the three daily newspapers (*Al Ra'i*, *Al Dostour* and *Sawt Al Shaabi*). The new law stipulates the reduction of the government's share in these newspapers to at least 30 per cent in two years after the enactment of the law. He also pointed out that the state still administers broadcast media, the radio and television networks.

Moreover, there are still the main "violations" of freedom of expression that... li-

been blamed for most of the 14 fatal attacks on policemen this year, mainly in southern Egypt. It claimed responsibility for the Badari death.

On Tuesday, the group's warning for bank depositors to withdraw their savings from government-owned banks expired.

There were no reports of runs on the banks.

The extremists contend that the bank's payment of interest violates Islamic law and has told depositors that their savings indirectly support the government.

Lebanon moves to curb rocket attacks on Israel

BEIRUT (AP) — Top government and military officials met Tuesday to plug security loopholes in South Lebanon that have pushed Israeli troops and resistance fighters to the brink of a new confrontation.

The meeting at the suburban Baabda palace was chaired by President Elias Hrawi, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, Defence Minister Mohsen Dalloul, Interior Minister Bishara Merhej and Lebanese and Syrian military officers attended.

As the session was under way, Israeli troops punched out of their self-proclaimed "security zone" in the south to comb fields and suspected guerrilla trails about one kilometre north of Zummariya, the main gateway into the enclave.

Security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said about 20 troops were involved in the operation, which was followed by an artillery barrage on villages facing the zone. No casualties were reported.

Government officials said the Baabda meeting focused on measures to cure cross-border rocket barrages on Israel and restrict guerrilla activity to the Israeli-occupied border enclave.

"We shall not approve any (guerrilla) operation that touches on the state's responsibility in South Lebanon," Mr. Merhej told reporters after the nearly three-hour meeting.

After similar attacks on northern Israel last July, Israeli troops mounted massive air and artillery attacks on suspected bases of Hezbollah, or party of God, which claimed responsibility for the ambush.

But the situation sharply deteriorated after a Katyusha rocket attack that damaged a factor in northern Israel Wednesday.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin blamed Palestinian dissidents for the barrage, and gave Israel an excuse to derail the Arab-Israeli peace talks, a government official said. He requested anonymity.

Tension in the south has been on the rise since a Feb. 7 ambush in which four Israeli soldiers were killed. Israel retaliated with a spate of air and artillery attacks on suspected bases of Hezbollah, or party of God, which claimed responsibility for the ambush.

At present, the law limits the definition of a journalist to a person who is a member of the association. "This is a grave violation of one of the most fundamental rights of human beings: their right to join or not to join associations.

"The only criteria that should be taken into account here is the professional one and the financial or political or whatever," Mr. Essoulam insisted. "Newspaper editors should be the ones who decide who to employ."

Article 5 which forces the journalist to reveal their sources of information to a court of law; article 7 which guarantees that officials and non-officials facilitate the task of journalists is not obliging. The financial restrictions imposed on the publication of newspapers are all considered by Article 19 as binding elements on the work of journalists and on the freedom of the press.

"People have the right to publish whatever they want. Financial and political considerations must not be the issue," he said.

Mr. Essoulam insisted that all of these articles, which are inconsistent with press freedom, should be amended. otherwise, "the fear of saying you are different will always linger... this fear has to be killed because press is the avant-garde of the democratic process in all countries."

Known as "pieds noirs," or black feet, the ex-colonists have been torn between keeping a low profile and trying to lead normal lives since gunmen started killing foreigners last year.

"This is the first warning that's been directly addressed at us," said a retired pied noir, on condition of anonymity.

Grau was the 28th foreigner, and the sixth French citizen, to be killed in an apparent attempt by radicals to undermine foreign investment in the vital oil and gas industry and overthrow the military-backed regime.

About 3,000 people have been killed in a two-year insurgency. The revolt was sparked by a military coup in January 1992 halting Algeria's first multi-party parliamentary elections, which a fundamentalist party was winning.

Meanwhile, the unlimited strike launched Tuesday by employees of the state-run cen-

(Continued on page 5)

Column 8**Yeltsin returns to Kremlin**

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin made his first public appearance here in a week Tuesday, meeting President Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan who is on an official visit. They discussed the situation of Russians in Kyrgyzstan and bilateral economic and trade relations, a statement from Yeltsin's office said.

Mr. Yeltsin officially arrived with a cold, virtually disappeared from view on Feb. 3 when he got back from a brief stay in Georgia. He has been staying at Zavidovo 30 kilometres (20 miles) from the capital, and emerged only on Feb. 15 to discuss the Bosnian crisis with British Prime Minister John Major.

Rome hospital probed over illegal traffic of corneas

ROME (AFP) — Police investigating a Rome hospital suspected of illegally trafficking in corneas have exhumed the bodies of four people whose eyes were removed and replaced with glass eyes, officials said here Tuesday. The judge handling the investigation, Stefano Meschini, ordered that the bodies be exhumed Monday after employees at the San Camillo Hospital revealed the illegal cornea traffic. Officials said a preliminary examination of the victims showed that their corneas had been surgically removed but hospital records do not indicate that such operations were performed. Investigators are trying to determine where the glass eyes were manufactured and whether the hospital purchased them. Some of those targeted by the investigation include the head of the ophthalmology department at San Camillo, Giancarlo Falcinelli, his assistant Gregorio Barogi, the head of the Anatomical Department Giovanni Mascioli and a technical official, Giancarlo Mauri.

Lebanon moves to curb rocket attacks on Israel

"Decisions have been taken to preserve security throughout the country and safeguard human rights over